Sandwell
CHRONICLE

Thursday, August 17, 2017 | Read by more than 64,000 people | Price when sold 70p

Hundreds of visitors caught without tickets pay the price

VALLEY PARKING FINES TOP £17K

Report by Richard Guttridge

MORE THAN £17,000 has been paid in parking fines since charges were controversially introduced at a Black Country park last year.

Hundreds of drivers who tried to get away without paying or overstayed at Sandwell Valley Country Park were slapped with charges.

Parking fees were brought in at the West Bromwich site for the first time last November in an attempt by council bosses to raise for money for maintenance of the park. But the move was unpopular with many visitors, who complained they had never had to pay before.

Drivers have to pay from 40p for an hour up to £2 for more than four hours. Those who don't pay face fines of £50.

Penalties can be dished out for not paying or displaying a ticket, not parking correctly in bays or pulling up when the park is closed.

It means around 300 drivers – more than one a day on average – have been hit with fines.

Reasonable

Council leader Steve Eling has defended the decision to charge drivers and said: "We have to maintain our car parks and it is a reasonable set of charges. Most people are paying these without complaint and we have a small number of people who clearly haven't.

"When you consider what you have to pay in some places, including country parks, prices there are low, and we have season tickets which people can buy rather than paying every time. People want facilities like this to continue to be maintained to a top-quality level and we have to look at how we can do that."

Despite the decision to bring in charges, families have continued to flock to the popular attraction. More than £50,000 has been paid into the parking machines since they were installed.

Parking charges came in as bosses argued they could no longer afford to pay for the upkeep of Sandwell Valley. Charges were brought in at car parks across the site, at Lodge Hill Road, Swan Pool and Forge Mill Farm Visitor Centre daily between 9am and 6pm.

Blue badge holders can still park for free. A 12-month parking pass is available for £40.

It comes after it was revealed Sandwell Council needs to save another £16 million by 2020 - on top of nearly £50 million of cuts since 2015.

ROB KICKS OFF MARTIAL ARTS FOR YOUNGSTERS

Former karate champ Rob Lock hosted a martial arts experience at Bleakhouse library with senior supervisor Mandy Gem-White

A KARATE champ took time out to help youngsters learn self-defence and kick their confidence into shape.

Rob Lock, who has 12 black belts and was the British karate champion for five years, visited Bleakhouse Library in Oldbury for the unique martial arts workshop.

Each session lasted around an hour and involved Rob teaching key moves to children in case they ever get caught in danger.

Rob explained: "I have doing martial arts for many years now and the sessions are really about self-defence and to give children an insight into that in case they are ever in danger. The big message is to get away from danger first, but know how to defend yourself if you can't.

"I love touching base with youngsters and people who do not get out to martial arts classes. The great thing is libraries are available to everyone. The children came down and had a laugh and learnt some techniques and I tried to make it as fun as possible."

Over the years Rob has also been in the spotlight with his work. Last year he got to work on the film Suffragette after he came third in recent years in Britain's Hardest on Sky, hosted by EastEnders tough guy Steve McFadden. Rob added: "I've coached lots of celebrities, I'm up for any challenge and have just applied for Bear Grylls The Island.

"I've been very lucky to be able to work with some really great people.

"After Suffragette last year I had the chance to train Helena Bonham Carter at her home too, which was fantastic."

Deb Worley, senior supervisor at the library, said: "It was a different event for us and something for the children to get their teeth into. It was about helping children release their own potential. It was great to see their motivation be built up."

MAGISTRATES

Man remanded over body in car

A MAN who drove to a police station with a dead body in his car has appeared in court charged with murder.

Sukhwinder Singh, aged 40, was remanded in custody by Walsall magistrates to appear at Wolverhampton Crown Court on Tuesday.

Singh, of MacDonald Close, Tividale, spoke only to confirm his name and address.

The corpse was in the passenger seat of a BMW when it pulled up at West Bromwich police station's car park on Moor Street at around 10.20am on Thursday.

HOUSING

Ousted families now rehomed

RESIDENTS who were evacuated from a block of flats after it was judged to be unsafe have now all been rehomed.

Families were left homeless after they were told they must leave Metro Court in High Street, West Bromwich, after it was found the building was not meeting fire safety regulations.

They were left searching for somewhere to live after being left homeless, with many being put up in the Premier Inn hotel next door.

HEALTH

Hospital hits £3m target in funding

A HOSPITAL fundraising appeal has reached its £3.65 million target.

Birmingham Children's Hospital's Star Appeal, which was launched in October 2015, hit the goal thanks to a closing gift of £650,000 from St James's Place Foundation. The money raised will fund the UK's first Rare Disease Centre.

Bosses said this will provide a single place for 'all assessment, diagnosis, treatment and research, bringing together a team of experts from specialities across the hospital all under one roof'.

INSIDE

A chip off the old block for 60th

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City acting graduate saddles up for role

Actor Lewis Howard

A WEST Midlands acting graduate has been snapped up to appear in the internationally acclaimed production of War Horse.

Birmingham School of Acting alumnus Lewis Howard has been cast as the Heart of Joey, a horse from Devon who was sold to the British cavalry during the First World War and shipped to France.

Mr Howard will join the production on its upcoming national tour which begins in Marlowe Theatre in Canterbury on Friday September 15 before visiting Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Nottingham, Plymouth and Glasgow.

Mr Howard said: "I'm puppeteering the heart of Joey for this tour of War Horse and it's my first job for the National Theatre, so I am very excited and humbled to be part of this production."

Based on the award-winning Michael Morpurgo novel, the National Theatre play follows Joey's journey as he's caught up in enemy fire, fights for both sides and finds himself in no man's land.

The Birmingham's School of Acting graduate has also performed at Edinburgh Festival Fringe and has starred in the 2016 film The Big Return of Ray Lamere.

Daniele Sanderson, Deputy Head of Birmingham's School of Acting, said: "We are thrilled that Lewis has secured a role in this wonderful production and look forward to seeing him in action when the tour lands at Birmingham Hippodrome next year."

The production has already completed a record-breaking eight year London run last year, having being viewed by seven million people in 97 cities in 10 countries. As the National Theatre's most successful play it has won 25 awards

Crackdown on off-road bikes amid safety fears

A CRACKDOWN is being launched against off-road bikers who are causing a nuisance in the Black Country – amid fears 'someone could be killed'.

Police and council bosses in Sandwell are planning to use car cruising laws to help rid streets and public areas of bikers.

The High Court order looks to stop those riding motorbikes in public open spaces such as parks and play areas.

Councillor Elaine Costigan, Sandwell Council's cabinet member for public health and protection, said: "We are really worried that someone is going to get killed if people continue to ride motorbikes over our public open spaces.

"People's safety is our top priority. Our CCTV team is passing to the police all images of people caught on camera using motorbikes in an anti-social manner.

Problem

"People committing anti-social behaviour also face action for a breach of their council tenancy agreements, which may result in them losing their home."

The order applies where there are two or more vehicles involved in speeding, racing and performing stunts, causing problems such as risk of injury and damage, noise and nuisance to others.

Promoting, publicising and organising rallies on public land involving vehicles is also banned under the order.

People riding motorbikes illegally face arrest and having their bikes seized, although motorbikes can be ridden on private land if the rider has the land owner's permission. Any breach of the order can lead to a maximum sentence of two years imprisonment, seizure of assets or a fine.

Sgt Kym Jones, from Sandwell Police, said: "We are very concerned about the rise in the anti-social use of off-road motorbikes across the West Midlands, including here in Sandwell."

It's crunch time for early reading

Councillor Richard Marshall, with, left to right, Jo Wood, Woody Bear and Julie McKirdy from Sandwell Libraries

NEARLY 200 free breakfasts were served by volunteers at two local libraries in the first week of Sandwell's Cereal Readers project.

The breakfast clubs are running at Glebefields Library and Smethwick Library for six weeks over the school summer holidays.

They run every weekday from 10-11.30am and are open to all children aged four to 11. In the first week, 117 children together with 64 adults attended the Cereal Readers sessions, which offer cereal, fruit and juice as well as stories, activities and guided reading.

Leisure chief Councillor Richard Marshall said: "We know that times are really difficult financially for many families and school holiday time increases that burden.

"With Cereal Readers, families can have a healthy breakfast at the same time as enjoying reading and fun activities. This also ties in with the very popular Summer Reading Challenge, which helps to avoid children having a 'dip' in reading over the summer. It's fantastic that volunteers have served nearly 200 breakfasts in the first week – what a great start! While visiting the library, they can also join the hundreds of other children who have already signed up to the Summer Reading Challenge."

The Cereal Readers project is funded entirely through donations from businesses and run by volunteers. To volunteer or donate please call Glebefields on 0121 557 8641 or Smethwick on 0121 558 0497.

Care home plan set for school site resurrected

PLANS to build a care home on the site of a former school could be resurrected after the land was put on the market for £1 million.

Planning permission was granted for a two-storey care home on the Kings Hill School site in Wednesbury in 2012, but has yet to come to fruition. The site previously housed the Kings Hill School before it was demolished in 1992.

Plans for the 60 and 16-bedroom care facility were previously approved for the site, with it being thought that the larger home would provide care for the elderly, while the smaller would be used by adults with dementia, learning difficulties and mental health issues.

In 2008, Sandwell Council sold the land to the rear of Joynson Street when it was declared surplus to requirements.

It is now owned and put on the market by Birmingham-based mortgage broker Christie & Co.

A sale advert states that although plans have now lapsed for the site, they could be re-submitted.

It reads: "This opportunity has previously had two planning consents which have now lapsed but we believe the principal is there for a two storey new care home facility with 80 single bedrooms with full wet rooms."

Men and animals saved from blaze

A GARAGE was destroyed by an early morning blaze.

Firefighters from West Bromwich and Wednesbury were called to the scene in Brook Street at 5.39am on Saturday.

Two men and five animals were rescued from a house linked to the garage.

A fire service spokesman said: "The incident involved a severe fire in the garage of a semi-detached property.

"The garage was 100 per cent destroyed by the fire and it spread to 10 per cent of the main building.

"Two adult males were led to safety from the address as well as three dogs and two cats."

Smoke alarms were fitted at neighbouring homes.

"The incident was resolved by 7.49am."

Large knife seized by police officers

A LARGE knife was recovered following an arrest in the Black Country. The weapon was seized by officers and a suspect arrested in Smethwick. West Midlands Police posted an image of the blade on social media, declaring another weapon had been taken off the streets.

Tougher punishment called for tool thefts

'WE have got a major problem, it is crippling people.' Those are the words of angry carpenter Lee Watts, who has started a petition calling on tougher sentences for tool thefts.

Lee believes there is an epidemic, with traders being targeted by thieves and their livelihoods are being ruined.

Carpenter Lee Watts

He has launched his petition in the wake of tradesman who were targeted by thieves and had their tools stolen while volunteering on the set of DIY SOS in West Bromwich, where the team were helping to revamp the home of a family who lost a mother-of-two to cancer in 2015.

The 43-year-old from West Bromwich, who has been a victim of tool theft himself, said: "I think it is disgraceful what happened at the DIY SOS project. That was the final straw. It brought disgrace to the town.

"There is an epidemic which is taking place across the country too. We have got a major problem and it is crippling people.

"Thieves are targetting work vans and peeling doors off. They are stealing tools and damaging livelihoods. It is affecting families as well. These people are committing crimes."

Mr Watts, who runs his own company called Koncept Interiors, said he is determined to get a 'strong petition' together,

He said: "I have been targeted myself and had tools stolen, I know how difficult that is to recover from for a business. We just don't get enough help, I don't blame the police, I think the courts need to take more action

Boots in U-turn over store move

BOOTS has made a U-turn over plans to close one of its high street stores, with bosses now saying it will remain open.

The shop located on Three Shires Oak Road in Smethwick was due for closure, with the company announcing the move in February.

But after a review process, the shop will remain open, a Boots spokesman said. "At Boots UK we continually review our store locations to make sure they are where our customers need us most. We have re-assessed our presence in the local area and we have negotiated a new lease.

"As a result we are delighted to announce the store will be remaining open for business."

Into the valley, with summer festival

Last year's Punch and Judy show

SUMMERTIME gets very special over the bank holiday weekend at Sandwell Valley Country Park, which is hosting a summer festival.

Market and event organisers Bescot Promotions of Walsall and LSD Promotions of Stourbridge have joined ranks and will present a huge festival at Sandwell Valley Country Park, West Bromwich.

The event is from 9am until 5pm over three days; Saturday 26, Sunday 27 and Monday 28 August, spanning the bank holiday weekend. Entry to the event is free but parking charges will apply. The Sandwell Valley showground will be filled with a huge range of entertainment and a giant market with food, craft and a mixture of stalls, plus fantastic demonstrations.

The stalls will include a range of hot street food from vegan specialities to hot roast pork, artisan beers and real ale bars.

Councillor Richard Marshall, cabinet member for leisure said: "The Sandwell Summer Festival over the August bank holiday looks set to be a great event with something for everyone. We are keeping our fingers crossed for great weather and hope to see thousands of visitors over the weekend."

On Sunday and Monday, the festival will also host Sandwell's Strongest Man Contest featuring log lifts, tractor pulls, atlas stone lifting with a women's open-weight section being added this year for the first time.

The stage will see a number of local acts perform music, dance with performances from the Fizzogs – the Black Country dancing grannies.

This year Sandwell Valley will have its very own seaside and beach.

Patients have to go out of area for cancer care

CANCER patients in a Black Country borough could have to make trips to Birmingham for appointments, with a hospital facing the prospect of losing its oncology services.

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham is planning to withdraw its oncologists which have been allowed to work at Sandwell Hospital at the end of September.

Health chiefs in Sandwell said they were continuing to work with NHS England and commissioners to find a solution but have admitted they could lose the service, which would leave patients with tumours having take longer journeys to see a specialist. The hospital would still retain other cancer services such as chemotherapy.

Dr Roger Stedman, medical director at the Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, which runs the hospital, said: "Oncology services are an important part of local cancer services provision.

Concerning

"NHS England and other commissioners continue to support services operating from our sites as part of the wider cancer team. We continue to work with all involved to ensure that that is what happens."

Chief executive of the trust, Toby Lewis, admitted the uncertainty was concerning. It comes as cancer referrals to Sandwell Hospital have shot up in recent months.

In a report to board members, he said: "We have seen a surging rise in referrals for cancer in recent months associated with revised national guidance in general practice."

Brian Childs, from Upper G.I. Blues, a charity which supports cancer patients in the West Midlands, who is a cancer sufferer himself, said: "Keeping oncology services is essential. I hate to think what would happen if these patients have got to travel to Queen Elizabeth or New Cross for oncology on top of what they are already going through. This at a time when the patient is at their lowest ebb."

Chippie still frying high after 60 years

Front, owner Warren Rudge, of Netherton, his father Ivan Rudge, of Cradley, with regular customers

SUPPORTERS of a fish and chip shop came out in force to celebrate the business's 60th anniversary.

Ivans has been at the heart of the community in Old Hill since it was founded in 1957.

It has served more than three million bags of chips and two million fish in that time.

The shop was set up by Ivan Rudge and his wife Christine in August 1957. The business was Christine's idea – as her cousin had set up a chip shop, Westwoods, in Blackheath.

Mr Rudge used £1,000 of inheritance money from his grandmother's death to fund a shop in Coxys Lane. Initially the couple worked full-time jobs during the day and then the chippy in the evening. Their family helped keep the shop going while they were at their other jobs.

But after six months they moved to run the shop full-time.

Mr Rudge's son Warren proved a chip of the old block, starting at age nine for £3 a week.

He took over the shop aged 18,

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bumps and babs due at new group

A NEW group for mums-to-be and parents of children up to two is being set up. Starting September 13 the Bumps and Babies Group will meet every Wednesday at Warley Baptist Church in Oldbury.

The group aims to create a friendly environment for new parents to meet and chat and offers arts and crafts, baby toys, refreshments and biscuits.

Sessions will cost £1.50 per child and run from 1pm to 2.30pm.

Baby and Toddler Group sessions also run every Thursday at the Church, from 9am to 11am and 11.30am to 1pm. The sessions are suitable for babies and toddlers up to 5 years old and cost £1.50 per child.

For details call 07762303374.

Councillors back 20mph zone plan

TWO Sandwell roads could be made into 20mph zones in the battle against speeding drivers. The proposed speed limit would include traffic calming measures in Manor Road and Carrington Road, in the Friar Park ward.

Sandwell Council is asking people for views on the move with consultation events running from 5-7pm on September 14 at Park Hill Primary School, September 21 at St Luke's Church Hall and September 25 at the Millennium Centre.

Councillor Joy Edis said: "It's only a matter of time before there's an accident because there's a lot of speeding."

Ramada hotel is bought by group

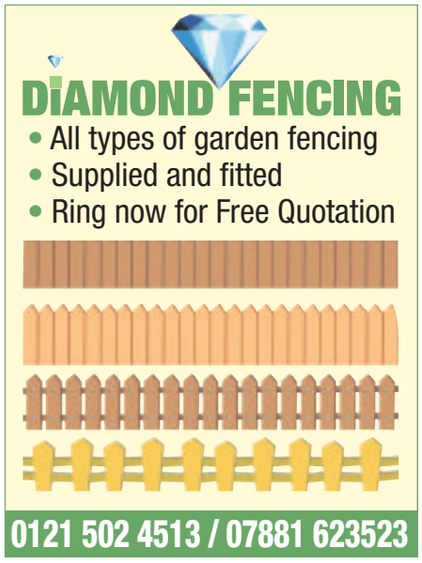
SPECIALIST business property adviser, Christie & Co has sold the Ramada Birmingham in Oldbury.

The 81-bedroom hotel and conference centre has been bought by Redwings Lodge Group, an established multiple hotel operator who currently has several sites in south east and central England.

The hotel was put up for sale following a huge turn around in business performance when former owner and local businessman, Gurjit Mahal, purchased the hotel out of administration in 2012.

Plan for warehouse to be shared housing

COUNCILLORS are to visit a warehouse to decide whether it should be allowed to be turned into shared housing. An application has been lodged with Sandwell Council to convert the unit, on Pennant Road, Cradley Heath, into a house of multiple occupation, featuring 20 rooms.



COUNTY NEWS

Volunteers praised for flowers' return

VOLUNTEER workers in the Sandwell Valley have been praised for helping introduce wildflower meadows into the beauty spot. The volunteers have worked alongside Sandwell Council staff to introduce native meadow plants into areas in the nature reserve.

Chiefs said the meadows will 'ensure that the meadow plants can grow in the specially-selected areas around the Valley area'. Councillor Richard Marshall, cabinet member for leisure, said: "The volunteers have done great work on traditional hay meadow management in the Valley fields to create some very colourful areas."

Putting students on right course

THE University of Wolverhampton has launched a 'Start Here' advertising campaign to highlight its courses on offer, featuring billboard adverts across the Black Country and the wider West Midlands.

The new clearing website pages give detailed information about what courses are available and how students can apply when they receive their results.

Katharine Clough, director of external relations, said: "Reasons for going through clearing may vary, but the end goal will be the same – to get that all-important place on a course. Visit www.wlv.ac.uk

Course weighs in with leading title

A RACECOURSE has been named as the Best Small Racecourse in the Midlands by The Racegoers Club.

Wolverhampton Racecourse has won the accolade. Jan Denning, commercial sales director, said: "We are delighted to have been awarded the prestigious title. The award itself serves as testament to all the hard work carried out and dedication of our staff. We look forward to hosting their annual exhibition next month on the September 28."

Inaugural vegan event due for town

A BLACK Country town will welcome its first ever vegan health and lifestyle event. The Crown Centre in Stourbridge will be packed with more than 40 stalls selling vegan food, goodies and lifestyle products on August 19, from 10.30am to 4pm.

There will be talks and films from leading vegan organisations. Admission is £1 with proceeds going to the Hillfields Animal Sanctuary.

Runners urged to join in with Joel run

RUNNERS are being urged to join a fun run in Sandwell Valley to raise money for the charity set-up in memory of Joel Richards and his uncle and grandfather who died in the Tunisia terror attack.

They are being encouraged to join the run the RunForJoel event at Sandwell Valley Country Park, West Bromwich, on Sunday September 10 for the SmileForJoel charity set up by Joel's mother Suzanne Evans of Wednesbury.

Joel – together with his uncle Adrian (a 49-year-old Sandwell Council manager) and grandfather Pat Evans – were killed in the tragic shootings in June 2015. Joel's younger brother, then aged 16, survived the atrocity.

Runners can choose between a competitive 5k run or a 3k fun run to help raise money for SmileForJoel in this popular community event open to individuals, families and friends of all ages and abilities across the region.

Suzanne said: "Last year was a fantastic event and won the Black Country Event of the Year competition and raised an amazing £27,000. I am hoping that this year's run, which is supported by Sandwell Leisure Trust and Sandwell Council, will be just as successful. The SmileForJoel charity raises money for Victim Support which supports all UK families who become victims of murder and terrorism, something which happens far too often as recent events in London and Manchester show only too well."

She urged runners to obtain sponsor forms or use the special page links to raise money at the www.smileforjoel.com website.

Lovell to start on £10m refurbishment of flats

By Simon Penfold

HOUSING construction company Lovell is starting work this month on £10 million of improvements at three blocks of flats in Oldbury.

The 1960s blocks of more than 200 flats on the Lion Farm Estate will undergo an 18-month programme of work that will include fitting the latest fire-resistant, insulated external cladding.

The three tower blocks

Lovell says the cladding will be 'of the highest standard'.

There had been concerns the work might be delayed following the Grenfell Flats disaster in London, but Lovell, which has been chosen to carry out the work by Sandwell Council, says it will begin later this month.

The internal and external refurbishment will take place at three 13-storey high rise blocks; Harry Price, Hackwood and Wallace Houses. As well as the cladding, the work will include new windows, balcony doors and panels. Lovell will also install new lifts and new door entry systems, create extra car parking, carry out landscaping and the redecoration of communal areas.

Residents will continue living in their homes during the refurbishment and Lovell says it will do 'everything possible to minimise disruption including providing a respite facility for their use during the day'.

In addition, Lovell will provide training and community initiatives locally. The company says it will recruit a number of local apprentices to work on the Lion Farm refurbishment, provide work placements through the project and where possible will use local contractors.

Lovell, which specialises in regeneration work, says it will also get involved in community events and support local organisations, including working with the Lion Farm Action Centre.

Supporters' tribute to superfan Les

Another fan wears a cap

Les James, who died aged 91

Supporters donned shirts with 'Les James 91'on them in tribute to Les

TOUCHING tributes were paid to Baggies superfan Les James – who died last month aged 91 – at the club's first game of the new season.

Mr James had supported the club since the 1940s and was thought to be the oldest fan still following the Baggies home and away. Fellow fans donned flat caps in tribute to Les on Saturday at The Hawthorns for the 1-0 win against Bournemouth.

A minute's applause was also held in his honour, while some fans wore Albion shirts with 'Les James 91' on the back. Les's seat was left empty – but covered by a scarf, jumper and framed picture of the Smethwick resident.

His funeral is due to take place on August 29.

A procession will stop at The Hawthorns east stand car park at 11.45am before heading to Sandwell Crematorium.

● Flying start – See back page

Hundreds of motorists caught in crackdown

POLICE caught more than 200 motorists drink and drug driving during an annual summer crackdown.

The month-long operation saw officers target motorists suspected of breaking the law and putting themselves and others at risk.

Officers from West Midlands Police and the Central Motorway Police Group (CMPG) operated roadside checkpoints and patrolled in unmarked vehicles during the national campaign throughout June.

Overall, there were 198 motorists who were either over the drink-drive limit or failed to give a sample – with 25 positive for drugs.

This included one motorist who recorded 152 micrograms in 100 ml of breath. The legal limit is 35 mcg.

Insp Richard Gathergood, from CMPG, said: "It is completely unacceptable to get behind the wheel while under the influence of drink or drugs.

"It is disappointing that some people in society still believe it is acceptable to drink or drug drive. Working with our partners in the Birmingham Road Safety Partnership, which includes the city council and fire service, we continue to try and educate people the dangers of drink or drug driving across West Midlands.

"If you suspect someone is drink or drug driving should call police or the independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111."

Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner Dr Lynnette Kelly added:

"Those who choose to take drugs or consume alcohol before getting behind the wheel of a car are a menace on our roads. They risk their lives and the lives of others."

Doreen toes line in sexism row

COMEDY queen Doreen Tipton has waded into the sexism row over Clarks shoes. The shoe firm has been criticised for labelling a girls style Dolly Babe, now withdrawn, and a boys shoe Leader.

The Black Country comedienne has released a new online video about a fictitious shoe firm from Sedgley which sells agnostic Jesus sandals, rainbow-coloured fluffy slippers and an 'ill-fitting range for those who prefer not to assign a right or left bias to their feet.'

She also makes her views known about the salaries paid to BBC executives, in particular Chris Evans, 'who made such a success of Top Gear', and Match of the Day presenter Gary Lineker, 'who talks about football once a week.'

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Driver who fled brawl drove into pedestrians

A CARELESS driver who hurtled into two pedestrians as he attempted to flee a fight scene has been handed a suspended sentence.

Jobless Mohammed Tariq crashed into his two victims as he tried to drive away from the violent outburst in Tipton.

The 41-year-old came before Judge Simon Ward at Wolverhampton Crown Court, for sentence.

The huge brawl, which had been planned, erupted into the streets surrounding one of the town's mosques after perpetrators jumped out of two BMWs on July 19 last year.

Tariq, of Watsons Close, Dudley, was at a barbecue when he was told about the fight, arriving soon after it had begun with a man who armed himself and joined the clash.

The defendant tried to drive away from the fight scene after his car windscreen was smashed but was unable to see clearly through his damaged vehicle.

He crashed into a man, who was thrown into the air before landing on the ground, and struck a woman after mounting the pavement.

Tariq, who admitted careless driving and perverting the course of justice, was handed a six-month sentence suspended for one year, with a 20-day rehabilitation activity requirement.

He was fined £120 and was handed a one-year driving ban.

Woman found dead at pool

A WOMAN has been found dead at a pool in Wednesbury. The body of the woman, whose death is not being treated as suspicious, was pulled from Hydes Pool last Tuesday evening. Her age and identity are not yet known. Police, ambulance crews and firefighters were all at the council-owned fishing pool next to the River Tame from around 8pm last night.

Concerned residents gathered next to the cordon on Woden Road South, where more than 10 emergency vehicles – including a water support unit from West Midlands Fire Service – had congregated near the junction with Hydes Road. A West Midlands Police spokesman said: "The death is not being treated as suspicious at this stage."

Banqueting boost

A BANQUETING hall will open in a shopping centre after plans were approved. A former shop in the Tollgate Precinct on Smethwick High Street will be converted to create the hall, which will have room for 250 people.

Boost for Chance glassworks revamp

The site at Spon Lane, Smethwick

PLANS to breathe new life into the iconic Chance Glassworks site have been given a boost after a skip hire firm was told to leave.

It means a £10 million masterplan to revamp the site in Smethwick will have made 'substantial progress' by the end of the year. Ideas of transforming the base into shops, homes – and even a hotel – have been put forward to developers, bosses say. Graham Fisher, from Chance Glassworks Heritage Trust, said 'big plans' were now in place.

He explained: "We are certainly looking to do something as soon as the site is cleared. We have got people chomping at the bit to get involved. It will be a living thing that people can use. Some kind of accommodation for businesses and residents.

"We are considering residential units or small term industrial units with residents above. It could even be a hotel or something to live in.We have had a few more grants come through so the funding situation is healthy. Further substantial progress will be made."

The restoration of the site was thrown into doubt after bosses at No 1 Skip Hire said they would not leave unless an alternative place was found for them.

The firm operates on an acre of land on the Spon Lane site and the development cannot go ahead while it remains in place.

An enforcement notice has now been served, but Roger Page, of planning agent Page Swinford, which is acting on behalf of No 1 Skip Hire, said: "There is nothing to stop our clients from making another planning application for an alternative use."

Probe begins after factory worker dies

INVESTIGATIONS have started into a 'fire incident' at a recycling plant in the Black Country which led to the death of a worker.

The man, in his 50s, died after suffering serious burns at Innovative Environmental Solutions factory in Oldbury last Monday.

Two other workers also received burn injuries in, what the company is calling, 'a fire incident'. They are in a stable condition. West Midlands Police, West Midlands Ambulance Service and the Health and Safety Executive were all called to the factory in Union Road.

A statement from Innovative Environmental Solutions said: "There was a fire incident on Monday at the IES energy plant in Oldbury.

"Following the completion of a maintenance task, three people were injured in an accident.

"We are deeply saddened to say that one team member died later in hospital from his injuries. This is an extremely upsetting time for everyone involved and we will do everything we can to support his family and his work colleagues.

Serious

"The company and Health and Safety Executive are on site investigating the cause of the incident." West Midlands Ambulance Service was called to the factory on Monday at 1.43am.

Spokesman Murray MacGregor said: "We had three patients in total – including a male who had very serious burns." Three ambulances were sent, with two of the injured workers taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. The third patient, who had minor burns, was taken to Sandwell General Hospital.

Police were called to the plant at 1.50am.

The rubbish processing plant turns waste, such as residue from old vehicles, into electricity. The plant replaced a former fuel depot which closed in 2005. Innovative Environmental Solutions has a common entrance with the EMR site, but is a separate firm. EMR has a minority shareholder interest and bosses said 'is helping us during this very difficult time.'

Jenson's a good runner for charity

Runner Jenson, with a trophy and cash, who was in Year 6 at Springfield Primary School, Rowley Regis

A YOUNG footballer has raised hundreds of pounds for his school after running a mile every day over six months.

Jenson Cole, aged 11 from Rowley Regis, took up the challenge as part of a pledge he made to become head boy of Year 6 at Springfield Primary School in Rowley Regis.

He had to deal with his 23-year-old sister Ellie getting cancer in 2015 before she made a full recovery. His proud mother Lisa Cole, aged 45, said: "I am so proud of him. When he went into Year 6, he applied to be head boy.

"To become head boy you have got to show why you are worthy of getting the position. He decided he would raise money for the school. He came up with the idea of running a mile a day every day from January 1."

Jenson carried on the challenge until he left the school in July. He will be starting St Michaels CE High School, in September.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Gas cylinders at risk in car blaze

EXPLOSIVE gas cylinders were at risk of igniting when a car burst into flames. Two fire crews attended the scene on Steel Bright Road in Smethwick at around 4.50pm on Friday.

The vehicle blaze was located to the back of a garage.

A West Midlands Fire Service spokeswoman said: "Acetylene cylinder are basically gas cylinders which are an explosion hazard. They had been exposed to the heat of the fire."

WMFS was unable to confirm the cause of the blaze or the extent of the damage. Fire crews left the vehicle in the hands of the owner and came away around 7.45pm that evening.

Dessert recipe is ice-cream of crop

AN ice-cream dream has been turned into a delicious reality as a new summer sundae has been created by a customer at a Sandwell dessert parlour.

Sprinkles Gelato at New Square Shopping Centre, West Bromwich, launched the mouth-watering recipe whipped up by customer Helen Harris.

Ms Harris, of West Bromwich, came up with her tropical-inspired ice cream sundae after Sprinkles and New Square asked the public to pitch ideas. The sundae is a combination of coconut ice cream with fresh cream, topped with fresh pineapple.

Boots in U-turn over closure bid

BOOTS has made a U-turn over plans to close one of its high street stores, with bosses now saying it will remain open.

The shop located on Three Shires Oak Road in Smethwick was due for closure, with the company announcing the move in February. But after a review process, the shop will remain open, a Boots spokesman said.

"We have re-assessed our presence in the local area and we have negotiated a new lease. As a result we are delighted to announce the store will be remaining open for business."

Delays on town route as maintenance starts

MOTORISTS are being warned about delays in place on a main route in West Bromwich town centre up until August 21.

Bull Street, which runs from Sandwell College to New Square Shopping Centre, will see workers on behalf of the Richmond Group carry out essential maintenance on the stretch of road.

The one way system will be in place for 24 hours everyday.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Poetry in our lingo? That caw be roight!

I'M sure they meant well, but the decision to turn next month's National Poetry Day into a celebration of regional dialects bears all the hallmarks of the ivory-tower academics patronising the hoi-polloi by trying to use a bit of their lingo.

Poets from different parts of the UK have been asked to choose a word exclusive to their local dialect, and write a poem about it.

According to lexicographer Susie Dent, the aim is to "shine a light into a lexicon that's too often overlooked." Which I think, translated into English, means learning about words people in other areas may not be familiar with. Yet isn't exclusivity the whole point of these words?

Believe it or not, most people in the Black Country don't talk about wammels, gleeds, or being clemmed to jeth due to a shortage of bostin fettle in their everyday discourse any more than they doff their cap when the Earl of Dudley trots past in his horse drawn carriage. But we are immensely attached to it because it is part of our heritage, identity, who we are. The last thing we want to hear is some shiny-faced pundit from the Home Counties talking about bibbles and reasty donnies with a curled lip and a knowing smile.

You only have to look at the regions represented by the project to get a flavour of how it is going to pan out. Merseyside, Humberside, Cumbria. Who, outside of the quangocracy, identifies themselves as being from Merseyside? They are from Liverpool, St Helen's, or The Wirral. Cumbria? Didn't exist until 1974, and most of us think of it as being the Lake District. And many years working with a dyed-in-the-wool native of Hull left me in no doubt that references to "Humberside" would not be well-received.

These are areas with no historic or cultural identity, but rather parcels of land drawn up by outside politicians and bureaucrats for the convenience of outside politicians and bureaucrats.

And then we come to the West Midlands, where the problem was highlighted perfectly by the BBC vox pop on the word that had been chosen to represent the area, "bobowler".

Now I know what a bobowler is. You probably know what one is. But the presenters could barely contain their amusement at the obscurity of the work, and nobody the roving reporter spoke to had a clue what it meant . Which is not that surprising, really.

Because bobowler – a butterfly or large moth – is unique to the Black Country. And the BBC man was asking people in central Birmingham.

Bostin, ay it? Yo caw put a price on that.

Adventurers abound alongside amiable antipodeans

Grylls and spills – exploring a headline which was in a national newspaper

Adventurer Pen Hadow – poles apart from sanity? As he returns on his chilly quest

Australian High Commissioner Alexander Downer, not at all living up to his name

Snow way for Pen to reach pole goal

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

CONFUSING headline of the week. "I survived on insects like Bear Grylls, says man lost in outback for three days." (Daily Telegraph).

ANYONE else confused by Hugh's (Josh Whitehouse) plea to the lovely Demelza (Eleanor Tomlinson) in the finale of Poldark (BBC1)? Hugh is going blind and mumbling a bit. As far as I could hear, he told Mrs Poldark that he wanted a snog in order to go into the darkness "knowing I once tasted Devon." Heaven, apparently.

IN May 1998, for reasons I won't tire you with, I was standing on an ice floe 200 miles from the North Pole at 20 degrees below zero, watching a councillor from Wolverhampton trying to persuade an Arctic explorer to pack it in and come home (like I say, it's complicated). The explorer, Pen Hadow, was making absolutely no progress on his way to the pole. Every day he trekked a few miles north across the floes and pitched his tent. As he slept, the floes drifted a few miles south. But, despite the pain, cold and polar bears, he refused to be rescued. All we could do, after a perilous 14-hour flight to find him, was give him extra food and a small boat and wish him well. Hadow carried on trekking north for a few more days before being rescued by a navy vessel. Now, at 55, he's off again, leading a party trying to sail two yachts to the pole to demonstrate climate change. Back in '98 he struck me as utterly bonkers and a tad selfish. But above all, a tiny dot at the top of the world, limping on with an injured knee, he looked incredibly vulnerable. I would not have put money on him being alive, let alone still exploring, nearly 20 years later.

IF I learned anything from my Arctic adventure, it is not to eat luke-warm runny egg sandwiches as one's Twin Otter makes its final approach to land on a large piece of ice. This is needlessly adding nausea to terror. One of my few claims to fame is that I have thrown up at 86 degrees north.

ALEXANDER Downer. How did he slip through the net? The Australian High Commissioner popped up on the BBC's flagship radio programme Today this week and dared to utter the O-word about Brexit. Optimism. At a time when the only acceptable liberal-left narrative is that leaving the EU will destroy the country and sentence our grandchildren to eternal serfdom, Downer said some Brits were being a bit too glum. I will not poison your tender minds with more of his antipodean joy. As my mailbox over the past few days shows, some Brits are positively slavering for disaster. They cannot wait for armageddon. They are aching to embrace dereliction. How dare some cheerful Aussie walk on their dreams?

A BBC schools video on Roman Britain features a black soldier. The historian Mary Beard says Roman Britain was indeed ethnically diverse. For this, she has been pilloried on social media (why don't we call it antisocial media?). Consider what Rudyard Kipling, proud spokesman for the British Empire and the man who urged us to "Take up the white man's burden," had to say on the subject. You might imagine that Kipling, of all people, would believe in an ethnically pure, all-white ancient Britain. Not so. In his poem about the Thames, The River's Tale, he writes: "And Norseman and Negro and Gaul and Greek / Drank with the Britons in Barking Creek ." A black face in Londinium 1,800 years ago would have attracted no more attention than it does today.

THANKS for your horror stories of deliveries by couriers. I loved the tale from a reader who received a text message that a parcel would be delivered to his address at 11am. Which was odd because he wasn't expecting anything. Next came a text with an image, apparently showing the parcel delivered by his side door. It turned out the photo was of somebody else's side door. The parcel, which had nothing to do with him, had been safely delivered to an address in Liverpool. The reader lives in Walsall.

THANKS, too, for your tales about dodgy pub quizzes. They reminded me of the one occasion when I objected to a quiz result, on the grounds that the rules stipulated teams of four and the "winning" team had six. "Oh, it's just a bit of fun," laughed their captain, collecting a handsome prize. Depends on what you call fun.

YOU are about to leave a restaurant and ask for the bill. "How much would you like to pay?" says the waiter. "Just the bill, please," you insist. "Yes," says the waiter, "but how much?" Bonkers? Of course it is. Yet this is how Britain's "divorce bill" from the European Union is being decided. They want us to suggest a figure. We should tell Brussels to do the sums and give us a properly itemised invoice. Then we can move on to the "I never had fried rice" argument, followed by tearing up the bill and rushing for the door.

TALKING POINT

Cyclists: Go bike to basics on safety

DRIVING home down the dark country lanes I cornered – luckily quite slowly – to be confronted by not one, but two cyclists.

As they were riding two abreast and pretty much taking up most of that side of the road I had two options: I go round them, right across the other side of the road, putting myself and drivers on the other side at risk; or I wait until they put their brains into gear to choose the safer option to cycle single file.

Yes you guessed it, no thought on their behalf and I am forced to do the former, thankfully there was nothing coming the other way although I still had to drive behind them for around half a mile before it was safe to go past – blind corners.

How many times has this situation been the case? And I have to say on most occasions it has been cyclists wearing the tops with their cycling club name on the back. I feel tempted to ring the club up and tell them how irresponsible this is. It's not the thing that most 'Joe Bloggs' cyclists do. Surely if you are a member of a club you should know how to ride safely, even if you are racing against the clock. My husband and I recently returned from France where most of the cities and towns are well-blessed with cycle lanes and they are very well used. But even with the advantage of these special lanes the cyclists do not abuse the system by straying outside the lines and into the drivers' area.

When our children were small they all had bikes and we would go on rides as a family. They were always taught to keep single file, cycle in the middle of the line with adults taking the front and back positions, and never to ride alongside chatting to each other.

Another thing that was a no-no was cycling with headphones on. My husband drove behind a cyclist and tooted to show that the rider was straying to the middle of the road. He totally ignored him. When he finally passed, he realised why – headphones with music blasting in his ears. He had no idea there was even a car there, and yes, he was a club cyclist!

And just one more gripe, years ago, not a safety issue this time, more one of good taste. We once had a colleague who cycled into work – very admirable – the only problem was when he got here he did get changed but left his sweaty clothes and, even worse his trainers, steaming at the side of the office. Not pleasant. Fortunately he has now left and no doubt is stinking out somebody else's office. Not nice but at least this won't kill you!!

SUE ATTWATER

● **See next week's Talking Point as we give the cyclist's verdict on drivers.**

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Time for remain camp to accept die is cast

I THINK that Trevor Fisher (July 26) is looking at the present world through rose-tinted spectacles. Admittedly things were not perfect 40 years ago, but I refute his claim that it is a delusion of belief for the elderly to look back.

Wages then were a fraction of what they are today but the cost of living compensated for the differential. Murders were extremely rare whereas today we hear of at least one or two every week. Stabbings, assaults on teachers, car-jacking, acid attacks and teenagers leaving school unable to calculate or string a sentence together were unheard of.

The union that we voted to join was a 'Common Market', not the 'United States of Europe' with Germany gaining the dominance she sought by conflict in WWII. It really is time 'remain' voters accept that the 'die is cast'.

Does Trevor Fisher really believe that France and Germany will 'spite' one of their best markets to whom they sell vast numbers of vehicles and large quantities of food and wine? The world will not come to an end when we leave this legal and economic straitjacket. This union is already sagging at the knees with many of its members having far worse unemployment and financial problems than us.

Our large financial contribution will be missed but there is no reason that we can't have an amicable relationship with Europe whilst also trading with our old Commonwealth friends and the fast emerging economies of the world.

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN
Great Barr

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
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Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
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Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

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Revitalise carers and loved ones

DID your readers know that there are 6.8 million carers in the UK and every day another 6,000 people take on a caring responsibility?

Unpaid carers face huge challenges providing care for disabled or older loved ones.

I work for a fantastic charity called Revitalise. We provide much-needed respite holidays for disabled people and carers at three accessible UK centres, and we're appealing to the nation on BBC Radio 4 to ask for more support for the nation's unsung army of carers.

Our Appeal will be presented by our good friend, the writer and comedian Arthur Smith, who is a Vice-President of Revitalise. Arthur talks about his own experience as a carer for his mother Hazel.

The appeal will be broadcast on Radio 4 on Sunday at 7.55am and 9.26pm, then repeated on Thursday 17, at 3.27pm. To find out more visit www.revitalise.org.uk

COLIN BROOK
Revitalise

Sack BBC bosses who backed pay for stars

LIKE most other people, the salaries paid to some of the so-called stars at the BBC came as a complete surprise to me. I do not accept that we the licence fee payers should be paying this amount of money which these people are given every year.

I have heard the BBC state they need to pay this amount to retain these people, well I say don't pay it and let them leave.

Looking at the level of pay I would suggest there should be a ceiling for all workers and men and women doing the same job should be paid equally.

So cut the salaries, say goodbye to those who want to leave and sack the highly-paid incompetent people who sanctioned these crazy salaries.

JOHN GREEN
Sedgley

Help with finding my birth father

HELLO I wonder if you can help me. I am currently searching for my birth father John Thompson.

He was born in 1941 to my grandparents Lily and Ernest Thompson in Wednesbury. John was the youngest of five children.

He met my birth mother Pamela Main while they were in the Army. They had three children, Stephen John born 1961 but sadly died as a baby. My sister Susan was born 11.7.1962, myself born 20.3.1964 as Margaret now Jayne.

My birth parents split-up and my sister and I were put up for adoption. We were adopted by kind and loving adoptive parents Dennis and Janice Blakemore in 1967. Apparently I was named Margaret after my birth father's sister. I do know that John got remarried and worked at Goodyear Wolverhampton. Thank you.

JAYNE BLAKEMORE
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There are lots of opportunities for local, older people to improve their strength and balance at over 20 weekly classes delivered by Agewell throughout Sandwell.

Taking place at a variety of community venues including leisure centres and church halls, participants are seeing improvements in their general wellbeing, as well as their mobility, confidence and balance.

The latest addition to Agewell's Community Exercise Programme is a Tai Chi class in Smethwick.

Interested?

Call Agewell on 0121 796 9333 to find out which class is best for you.

Having fun whilst exercising. Around 60 older people a week regularly attend Agewell's popular exercise class at Portway Lifestyle Centre.

Helping you and your family before and after being diagnosed with dementia

KINGFISHER BUDDIES

LOTTERY FUNDED

Kingfisher Buddies is a new service from local social enterprises Agewell and Dementia Pathfinders, which supports older people across Sandwell who are in the early stages of dementia.

Our aims are to:

- Support you in seeking a diagnosis
- Be there to provide the advice and support you need to take it all in
- Guide you and your family through what can be done now to better prepare for the future
- Encourage you, and your carers, to take part in one of our enjoyable weekly activities
- Help you to make the most of your life after diagnosis

Kingfisher Buddies Clubs

Our clubs provide a supportive and enjoyable place where you can share experiences and chat with others in a similar situation.

Turn up and enjoy a variety of activities, or just enjoy a cuppa and a chat. Activities will vary at different venues.

For anyone in the early stages of dementia, carers and family members. All are welcome.

Contact us to find a club local to you.

There is a small charge of £2.50/£3 per session which includes refreshments and some activities.

Contact us today to make an appointment with one of our friendly and supportive Community Pathfinders who will come and visit you at home.

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Fans' version of events are put on iPlayer

THE dramatic collection of stories told by Aston Villa, Baggies and Birmingham City fans in the stage production Stadium can now be watched for free on the BBC iPlayer.

A star of the show, which ran at the Birmingham Rep earlier in the year, was fundraiser Blind Dave Heeley.

Described as 'the drama of theatre meets the thrill of football', Stadium features real stories and memories from fans from across the Midlands footballing spectrum. There is footage of interviews, insights, music and songs from fans and inspirational supporters as well as some match action.

Also live testimonies from devoted supporters including Baggies fan Dave. Among the highlights are a bagpiper who has played at hundreds of matches and the bride who got married in the colours of her beloved Blues and the Villa Rockets Powerchair football team.

Talking about his role during the theatre run Dave said: "The story is primarily about Blues and Villa fans, I think they've thrown me into the mix for a bit of Premier League class.

"I couldn't do this as a profession though – you're on for three minutes, then you're waiting about for three hours."

Stadium is available to view on BBC iPlayer until September 6 at http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p05939yf/stadium

Warehouse scheme prompts site visit

COUNCILLORS are to visit a warehouse to decide whether it should be allowed to be turned into shared housing.

An application has been lodged with Sandwell Council to convert the unit, on Pennant Road, Cradley Heath, into a house of multiple occupation, featuring 20 rooms.

Reel life for amazing Dave

"STUFF like this doesn't happen to us lads in West Bromwich." That is how legendary fundraiser Blind Dave Heeley summed up his thoughts about the movie which is being made about his life.

The man himself says he is 'pinching himself' about his journey featuring on the silver screen. He is the first blind man to complete seven marathons in seven continents in seven days, and has also finished the gruelling Escape from Alcatraz swim. In 2011, Blind Dave ran 10 marathons in 10 days from John O'Groats to Land's End.

He also took part in a 700-mile week-long bike ride between Zurich and Birmingham in 2012.

Currently, he is in the middle of finishing each of the 25 Great Run events in a year.

The 40-minute film about his life – entitled 7 Days – will be released later this year. The 59-year-old said: "I feel quite privileged and also very proud that somebody wants to do it.

Excited

"When the book came out I still didn't really believe I'd had a book published and what had happened in my life was between the covers.

"Stuff like this doesn't happen to us lads in West Bromwich.

"After the book a few people came up to me and said 'we've got to get a film done'. Then Nigel got this production company involved, they read up on me and it went from there. When they told me what they were planning to do I was left with an open mouth – thinking 'this doesn't happen to people like me'. I'm quite excited for it. To be honest I think it's absolutely bloody fantastic.

"The support I've had from a lot of people in recent times – including the Baggies, where I've been on the pitch and got the Freedom of The Hawthorns – has been unbelievable."

A poster to promote the film

Dave seen when he brought out his autobiography

Fellow adventurer Sir Ranulph Fiennes with Dave

A proud moment for Dave as Olympic torch bearer

The film, called 7 Days, will be about 40 minutes long so it can be shown at specific movie festivals. But the producers said they are hopeful that if it gets a positive response then it could be turned into a feature film.

Blind Dave said: "It's going to be a short film and hopefully it gets the message across to people that anything is possible.

"It will focus on me doing the seven marathons but also have flashbacks to when I was younger and losing my sight.

"I think the way they are planning to do it will be very powerful. Hopefully it should inspire people.

"I'm still pinching myself about the book – now I'm pinching myself about this film.

"With it being 40 minutes or so they will be able to put it in certain film festivals but they hope if there's a good response it may attract funding so they could do a feature film."

Blind Dave joked that Brad Pitt 'wasn't good looking enough' to be cast as the Baggies fan in the feature.

Sir Ranulph Fiennes, the man dubbed 'the world's greatest living explorer, said: "I was very pleased to hear a film project about Blind Dave Heeley is going to be made.

"He is an inspirational athlete and gentleman – I look forward to seeing it."

Former Aston Villa owner Sir Doug Ellis, who is an executive producer on the film, said: "I was glad to support this film about Blind Dave Heeley.

"It will inspire many. His story will show it's not about what you can't do – it's about what you can do."

Students get gold after 40-mile trek in the wild

Eldair with college principal Graham Pennington and DofE Manager David Hughes

Marta receives her award from Sandwell College Principal Graham Pennington

TWO intrepid Sandwell College students have struck gold by gaining the top Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Both Marta Szmyt and Eldair Ngoma braved torrential rain to trek 50 miles across Dartmoor during a four-day expedition in the wild.

They will now receive Gold Award Certificates from Prince Edward at a formal presentation at a Royal Palace in London.

The Duke of Edinburgh himself, retired from official royal duties earlier this month.

Central Sixth student Marta volunteered as a group leader for 18 months with Walsall Pathfinders and Adventurers.

Club director Cherry Scarlett said: "Marta has gained a lot of confidence in her creative abilities, which makes her a fantastic teacher.

"Her dedication, attendance (she didn't miss one meeting), organisation and talent can be seen in the achievement of her students."

The 19-year-old former Blue Coat C of E Academy student also spent 12 months improving her physical fitness in the gym and learned to play the ukulele from scratch in six months.

Marta then completed a week of classical civilisation and ancient history summer school.

DofE Gold Expedition Assessor, Nick Muir, said: "Marta coped extremely well with the very challenging conditions of Dartmoor. Well done – a pleasure to assess."

Marta is now awaiting her A-level results in history, philosophy and biology after being offered university places at Nottingham and Birmingham to study a degree in Ancient History.

Public Services student Eldair spent 18 months volunteering in the West Bromwich Barnardo's shop to complete his award. Shop manager Eve Baker said: "Eldair has always conducted himself in a professional manner, always willing to help both customers, and his peers. He has also on occasions mentored new staff to assist with their training."

The 18-year-old former Aldridge School student spent 12 months improving his physical fitness in the gym, ultimately weightlifting 40kg, and is now ready to take his test after learning to drive.

Eldair also completed a residential week with National Citizen Service.

DofE Gold Expedition Assessor, Nick Muir, said: "Eldair's group worked well together through the difficulties they encountered with navigation and weather conditions. Their camping skills and food selection were good."

Eldair is now set to pursue a career in policing after being offered university places at Coventry, De Montfort and Derby.

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First Brexit summit held by mayor

IMMIGRATION and research funding were among the issues up for discussion at the West Midlands' first Brexit summit.

The event was organised by the region's Mayor Andy Street and saw business leaders question Brexit Minister Robin Walker about the challenges and opportunities of leaving the EU.

Speaking after the event at Aston University, Mr Street said: "I have pledged as Mayor to help the West Midlands make a success of Brexit.

"The most immediate way I can help make this happen is to provide a way for businesses and universities to get their views heard by the people who are involved in the negotiations.

"As a big exporter of manufactured goods, particularly cars, we have a huge stake in this process."

Mr Walker said: "The West Midlands makes a significant contribution to the UK's economy. We will continue to work closely with industry to make sure their views are being reflected as we seek to negotiate the right deal for the whole of the UK."

Youngsters put issues in focus

YOUNGSTERS from as far afield as Brazil, China and Australia enjoyed the chance to debate issues in Sandwell Council's chamber.

A group of 38 young people on a cultural exchange, organised by the Lions Club International Youth Centre, spent an afternoon at the council house and met councillors as well as the mayor, Councillor Ahmadul Haque MBE.

Sandwell Lions Club arranged the visit which also included a trip to the Balajhi Hindu Temple.

Residents near sinkhole warned of unsafe homes

RESIDENTS of a road in Wednesbury have been told it's unsafe to remain in their properties after a sinkhole opened up.

The 6ft wide hole appeared outside the front door of a semi-detached house in Churchfields Road, on Sunday night, with slabs crumbling either side of the driveway and the house.

Report by Luke Bartlett

Emergency services were alerted and residents were told to leave their homes, according to a council spokesman.

Police were also instructing residents to move their cars from the surrounding area.

It is believed that an elderly resident had to be moved out of the property and be cared for by family.

Barriers have been erected outside the property. The sinkhole straddles a wall between the home and a garage.

Surveyors

One resident said: "The structural engineers told me I'm not supposed to be in this house."

Another described it as 'a coal mine issue'.

A Sandwell Council spokesman said: "The building surveyors have been out. The residents were advised not to stay in the property.

"The gas board went out to disconnect the gas supply.

"It is private property so they have got to get in touch with their insurance companies."

A West Midlands Police spokesman said the force was called just after 5pm on Sunday, and the council and utility companies are now dealing with the issue.

Councillor Elaine Costigan, who represents the Wednesbury North area, said it was 'concerning' for residents.

She explained: "I first heard about it at 10 o'clock on Sunday night and heard that an elderly resident had to be moved out the property.

"From what I hear I think the car on the drive started to sink down it, hence swift action was taken.

"It is concerning but I am pleased that the right people came out and dealt with it as quickly as possible.

"When things like this happen we need to get it resolved as quick as possible.

"Wednesbury was a very industrial area, so it seems like a thing that could happen at any time."

It comes as a similar sinkhole opened up in the area in February.

Half of Franchise Street in Wednesbury was closed off for almost two weeks, with buses diverted and footpath closures.

A close-up view of the hole which opened up on Sunday night in Wednesbury

Barriers in place at Churchfields Road

The hole appeared either side of a wall

New name is launched for city venue

A MAJOR West Midlands venue is changing its name next month, bosses have announced. The Barclaycard Arena will become Arena Birmingham from September 1.

Chiefs have said the new name and branding will be in place at the multi-purpose venue in the city centre for the new event season.

Its new guise comes after Barclaycard decided to step away from its long-term naming rights deal.

The Nooran Sisters, John Legend and The Australian Pink Floyd Show will be among the first to perform at the venue under its new moniker.

Phil Mead, managing director for the NEC Group Arenas, said: "The Barclaycard Arena has been a resounding success since it launched with Michael Bublé in 2014 following a £26 million redevelopment.

"The award-winning venue has attracted world-class entertainment from Drake to Iron Maiden and has secured high profile international sports events from the Davis Cup in 2016, to the IAAF World Indoor Athletics Championships in 2018.

"Much of what we have achieved is down to the support of Barclaycard who have been an excellent partner since 2012, but we are now entering another exciting era with Arena Birmingham."

McGuigan on way to Irish Centre

BOXING legend Barry McGuigan is to appear in the Midlands later this year.

The former champion will be at the Irish Centre in Deritend, Birmingham, on October 20 for An Evening with Barry McGuigan.

Tickets are £25 and and are available from www.shamrockevents.co.uk

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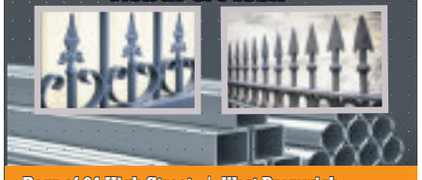

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Community workers shed light on new base

KEEN woodworkers and volunteers are shedding light on community projects thanks to a new home – in a shed.

The Tanhouse Shedders welcomed the Mayor of Sandwell to officially open their new base in Hamstead Road, Great Barr, thanks to support from Sandwell Council.

The council teamed up with the Royal Voluntary Service and the National UK Sheds Association to set up The Tanhouse Shedders at the Tanhouse Centre. Shed projects are designed and run by their members and provide opportunities to take part in practical woodwork skills and activities and share tools and resources.

Difference

Sandwell's deputy leader and cabinet member for neighbourhoods and communities, Councillor Syeda Khatun, said: "These projects make a real difference to the health and well-being of those who take part and I'd urge anyone who is interested to go along, have a cup of tea and find out more about their local group. I'd particularly like to thank the council's community partnership project officer Bal Dhillon for her hard work on this project over the past 18 months."

Phil Willoughby, Tanhouse Shedders secretary, added: "We are very grateful for the provision of Portacabin by Sandwell Council together with the award of a Local Area Budget Grant. It has allowed us to start the first Shed Association in Sandwell."

For more information email sandwellmensshed@gmail.com visit the Facebook page www.facebook.com/sandwellmensshed or call Bal Dhillon on 0121 569 5177.

The Mayor of Sandwell Councillor Ahmadul Haque opens the new Tanhouse Shed-

Dancing is fairy enough

FAIRY tale magic will spread across Sandwell Valley at a free open air dance show. The Fairy Tale Dance show on Sunday features a range of dance and drama based on classic and modern fairy tales.

Visitors are encouraged to bring a picnic and enjoy performances by Diamond Drama, Keneish Dance and Unfold Dance Theatre Company.

Councillor Richard Marshall, cabinet member for leisure, said: "The show is on the front paddock outside the Park Farm building where people can hire a traditional seaside deckchair or make use of free-to-use picnic blankets."

Two performances are planned starting at 10am-12.45pm and then 1.30-3.45pm.For more information, contact Alex Howell on 07827 305784 or 0121 556 0683.

On the Hunt for nursing talent to join trust team

SHE'S one of the key people who is responsible for recruiting more than 150 nurses to a Black Country hospital trust in just a matter of months.

Patricia Hunt is the force behind a recruitment drive at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust (SWBH) which has been hailed a huge success by the organisation's bosses.

The mum-of-two joined the Trust in 2002 and worked her way up to her role of recruitment and project manager.

Based at Sandwell Hospital, Pat, as she prefers to be called, helped to plan a jobs fair at City Hospital in July, which saw more than 150 people attend. It's no surprise that it is one of Patricia's career highlights. The event led to 95 conditional job offers.

Benefits

She said: "It was such a busy day and the atmosphere was bustling. I was so glad to see so many people come along and they walk away with a job offer. It showed that we are a trust that people want to work for. We had representatives from different areas of the organisation, who told them about our award-winning benefits scheme and the training opportunities that we have here.

"We will definitely hold more similar events at our various hospital sites."

It's not the only successful event that Pat has had her hand in. Earlier this year, she went along to a Royal College of Nursing (RCN) jobs fair at Birmingham's NEC. This led to around 50 conditional job offers.

And there are more planned for later this year – the Trust will attend RCN recruitment events in Liverpool, held on September 5 and London on October 3 and 4.

"My goal is to help the Trust simplify and speed up the recruitment process so people can start working quickly," she added.

"It's a very interesting role and no two days are the same. The team I work with are so supportive and knowledgeable and have helped me a lot."

It may be a surprise to learn that Pat didn't start out in this particular industry.

Her first job was working for a giftware association as a membership manager. However, she changed her direction once she realised she wanted to broaden her horizons.

After joining SWBH as an admin assistant for the Learning and Development team, she gradually built up her career through different roles before she was offered the job Recruitment Manager in 2009.

But what makes Patricia, who lives with her husband in Oldbury, most proud is she has completed her post graduate diploma in Business Management.

And she credits her parents as the inspiration behind all her achievements.

She said: "Although they passed away many years ago, the lessons they taught me are still with me. I have learned from them kindness and generosity. They treated everyone the same and they did not judge people. Instead, they accepted people for who they were."

For more information about the RCN jobs fair, visit http://www.rcn-bulletinjobsfair.co.uk/liverpool.

NHS HEROES

ONCE again we focus some of our time on the quiet heroes of the NHS, from a wide variety of backgrounds doing a wide variety of jobs.

Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust is one of the Black Country's largest NHS organisations. It employs 7,500 people, many of whom live locally. Last year, the trust provides care from 150 locations. This week we highlight:

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Recruitment and project manager

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Aer Lingus targets US gap at Brum airport

IRISH airline Aer Lingus is adding 50,000 seats to its schedule between Birmingham and Dublin this winter as it aims to pull in passengers bound for the US.

Birmingham Airport is losing its last direct flights to the US in October, when United Airlines pulls out. A replacement direct service to the States, to be run by budget carrier Primera, doesn't get off the ground until May next year.

That leaves a gap in the market that Aer Lingus aims to plug, jetting passengers from Birmingham to its major hub in Dublin in just 40 minutes. The Irish airline also runs a service enabling customers to clear US customs and immigration before they leave Dublin. Fares from the UK to Dublin start from £24.99 each-way.

Bear essentials to get in the swim for a free dip

SANDWELL'S Big Sleuth bears are making a splash – and if you visit all six of them, you can win a free swim!

Everyone who visits all of Sandwell's bears in Bearwood and West Bromwich can claim a free swimming session at any Sandwell Leisure Trust swimming centre.

The 10-week project supporting Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity has brought more than 100 bear sculptures to Birmingham, Solihull, Sutton Coldfield, Resorts World and Sandwell. A sleuth is the collective noun for a group of bears.

Leisure chief, Councillor Richard Marshall said: "The more people who visit The Big Sleuth bears, the more awareness we raise for the fantastic work of Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity, where around 1,000 Sandwell children are treated each month. We want people to have great fun meeting all of the bears in Sandwell, Birmingham and beyond."

To claim a free swim, people can present a digital voucher which is generated by visits to The Big Sleuth app – search 'The Big Sleuth 2017' in the App Store or Google Play.

The offer is in addition to free swimming for all Sandwell children aged 16 and under who swim for free during the school holidays, and residents over 60 who can swim for free any day before 1pm. The Big Sleuth, which is being run in conjunction with Wild in Art, is on until Sunday September 17.

Councillor Richard Marshall and Mark Wildman from Sandwell Leisure Trust

Sandwell's bears can be found at:

Bearwood • Lightwoods park near the skate park (BearTrix Blocker, commercial sponsor - Skate Hut)
• Bearwood bus station, Bearwood Road - (Bussy Bear - commercial sponsor - National Express)
• Warley Woods near the fountain and play area (Bentley the Bearwood Bear designed by Positive Activities Innovative Development and Rebecca Cresswell)

West Bromwich • High Street near the Farley Fountain (Bearolution – designed by West Bromwich Youth Council and Creative Arts)
• Outside Central Sixth, Sandwell College (Picnic Time For Teddy Bears - commercial sponsor - West Brom Building Society)
• Sandwell Park Farm (Uncle B – designed by looked after children and Cradley Heath Creative)

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AA sacks boss for misconduct

The huge AA base situated near the M5 in Oldbury

ROADSIDE recovery firm the AA has sacked executive chairman Bob Mackenzie for gross misconduct as it warned over full-year results.

The group, which has a large West Midlands base close to junction two of the M5 at Oldbury, said Mr Mackenzie had been "removed" by the board with immediate effect. A spokesman said it was a "personal conduct-related matter", but declined to give more information.

Mr Mackenzie has been replaced by non-executive chairman John Leach, who has been senior independent director at the AA since November 2014, while it has also named Expedia founder Simon Breakwell as acting chief executive.

The group made the shock announcement as it also said first-half performance has been hit by "erratic workload patterns", as it failed to adequately book roadside patrols to match demand.

Shares plunged as much as 18 per cent as it said it now expects its annual performance to be flat on the year before. Analysts at Liberum slashed their full-year earnings forecast for the AA by three per cent from £414 million to £413 million after the results warning. The AA had already begun plans to split the executive chairman role and will now speed up the appointment of a permanent chief executive following Mr Mackenzie's departure.

Mr Breakwell, who takes on the chief executive position on an interim basis, has been a non-executive director at the AA since 2014. As well as spending 10 years on the board of Expedia, he also set up the European operations for taxi hailing giant Uber.com.

The AA insisted that it had otherwise enjoyed a "robust" first half, with membership expected to be "marginally" up year-on-year in the first half, at around 3.33 million from 3.32 million last July.

Chiefs hit out at 'bemusing' plans by Heathens for track

PLANS for a new home for a speedway club have been labelled 'bemusing' by Sandwell council chiefs – who said they have not even discussed the scheme before it was submitted.

The Heathens Speedway Supporters Trust has drawn up proposals for a new track for Cradley Heathens in Oldbury.

Trust members have spoken of their optimism about the plans for the track which would be based at the Lion Farm Estate, although some residents had aired concerns about the possible noise problems with the proposal.

However, council bosses have since poured cold water on their aspirations – and said the application is currently invalid so will need to be resubmitted.

Councillor Richard Marshall, who is the authority's cabinet member for leisure, said: "I must stress there have been no discussions to sell this land to the Cradley Heathens and no discussions about using it as a speedway track.

Invalid

"In fact we were bemused to receive a planning application on council-owned land but the law does allow developers to do this.

"The application is invalid because the applicants have not paid the full fee and it lacks any supporting information. However if it is resubmitted, as with any application, the council is duty-bound to consider it."

By David Cosgrove

Cradley Heathens have been track-sharing with rivals Wolverhampton and Birmingham since reforming in 2010.

Attempts to find a site close to their Cradley roots in the Dudley borough have failed to come to fruition, which Trust member Mark Robinson admitted was frustrating.

He said the club was now focusing on its chosen site in Oldbury.

Mr Robinson said: "Our designs are for the speedway track to be a big bowl with an acoustic fence.

"We are talking to acoustic professionals to make sure it is right.

"There is a lot of work ahead of us, a lot of talking with the council and people from the Lion Farm.

"Hopefully, we can convince them this is a good project for the area."

The proposals for the Queens Field site in Oldbury include a number of other sporting facilities including cricket and rugby pitches, a BMX track and basketball courts.

Volunteers give theatre a green facelift

Volunteers seen outside the theatre which is based near Langley Street in Oldbury

A POPULAR theatre has been given a makeover by volunteers.

The Oldbury Rep's exterior was given a new lease of life by a 12-strong volunteer group who received donations of soil, pots and bamboo canes to help finish the job. The community gardening project at the theatre was also aided by West Midlands Police's Cannabis Disposal team.

The work comes as the theatre has completed a £15,000 refurbish to its foyer and box office area. Bookings for upcoming shows at the theatre can be made at on www.oldburyrep.org ahead of the autumn and winter panto season, with shows such as Equally Divided, Idle Women of the Wartime Waterways and Holmes and the Ripper all on show before Christmas. Panto Aladdin takes place in January.

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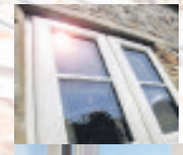

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Historic – Wolverhampton waterways by Mike Warville

Harry Parkes' photograph taken in Halesowen

Aaron Johal's pic outside Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

The Tipton Canal, by Mark Daniels, looks glorious at sunset

The entrance of Mary Stevens Park by Simon Beckett

Beauty of our home in focus

WHO would believe these stunning snaps were taken on a mobile phone?

Budding David Baileys have been capturing landmarks and scenes from Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge to Wolverhampton's waterways and Sandwell Council House.

Instameets uses the photograph sharing social network Instagram to allow keen amateurs with their mobile phones to enthusiasts and professionals to gather at a location to take pictures. Now a group has started in the Black Country.

And their rapidly expanding social media following is helping spread the word – and the pictures – to people far and wide.

Abi Garvey (@abigarveyphoto) Ed Brown (@notthetalkinghorse) and Steve Spencer (@stevie_spencer1973) established the IgersBlackCountry group on Instagram at the start of this year and it already has more than 700 followers. If you fancy having your work featured as the group's photo of the day, upload your images of the Black Country to Instagram using the hashtag #igers blackcountry

"A year on and several meets later we got chatting about having a day out, originally to go out looking for snow over Clee Hill in Shropshire, but we ended up staying local around Stourbridge," said Abi. "We had such a good fun day and got talking about doing more stuff together, sharing our love of all things photography. One thing lead to another and we decided we'd definitely meet up to do it all again and try and pull together other people from around the Black Country who share our passion for photography and love of the area."

The group picked the above images to show off the Black Country.

Steve said: "The images we've chosen here are a selection of those featured as our photo of the day.

"Who would have thought the canals could look so beautiful bathed in the setting sunlight or that a concrete multi-storey car park in Halesowen could be something you'd want to have on your wall?"

Instameets are also publicised on the group Instagram page's @ IGBlackCountry. Ed said: "To get involved – you can follow us on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Every day around 6pm we feature a photograph taken within the Black Country area with the aim of showcasing our industrial history and beautiful scenery that can be found here."

On board for wheelie cool day out at park

THERE will be some hot wheels on display at a Sandwell park on Saturday as summer skate jam comes to town.

Lightwoods Park in Bearwood will be a haven for tricks and stunts on scooters, BMX bikes and skateboards, with three age ranges available for participants – 12 and under, 13-16 and over-16s.

Prizes are available, provided by The Skate Hut as well as an opportunity to win a bespoke BMX in The Big Sleuth raffle in aid of Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity. The skate jam runs from noon to 6pm with competitive entries starting from 1pm. The event will be hosted by local pro skater Bob Sanderson. To participate people will need to register on arrival.

Leisure chief, Councillor Richard Marshall said: "It's going to be a great day out, not only for skaters and people interested in skating but also for families who can bring a picnic and anyone who wants to see some of the amazing improvements we've made to the house and park."

Lightwoods Park and House are undergoing a transformation under the £5.2 million Lightwoods Park and House restoration project, with £3.6 million secured from Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and the Big Lottery Fund (BIG).

Station is on track to earn top award

COSELEY station has been shortlisted for the Best Small Station award by National Rail.

The shortlist comes after a nine-strong team of keen gardeners, who created an extensive garden on Platform 2, caught the eyes of the judging panel. The work was part of London Midland's Adopt a Station scheme.

Faye Lambert, London Midland's head of community rail, said: "A huge thank you to the station adopters."

The awards are in September.

The Queen's Picture House opened in the Great War year of 1914

Queen Square with horse drawn carts around 1912

Queen Square around 1912 – ladders were kept there by the fire brigade if needed

Focus on city and how it was in bygone age

Lea Road junction with Birches Barn Road in the 30s

Lichfield Street looking from Princess Square – 1924

IT'S hard to imagine Wolverhampton without cars and bus lanes but these photos show it in a different light.

Unpaved roads, trams, early motor cars and horse-drawn vehicles reveal the city's humble past during the early 20th century.

The collection of high-definition old photos are courtesy of Dave Clare, a keen amateur photographer, who is one part of the duo behind the Wolverhampton in Old Photographs Facebook group.

Members are keeping the memories alive on the social group which now boasts more than 21,000 members.

Wolverhampton-born Mr Clare has fittingly worked at some of the city's most well-known establishments, including Banks's brewery, Beatties, Bilston College, Wolverhampton Polytechnic and then the University of Wolverhampton, from where he retired in 2010.

Starting as a keen amateur photographer in the early 1970s, he began systematically recording photographs of each street and all the main buildings, and returning to record the changes as they occurred.

MEMORY LANE

By Doug Wootton

Being limited by the cost of film and processing, he also started collecting old photographs and postcards of the town, to bolster his collection.

Stages

Mr Clare's collection of photos shows the city at various stages throughout the 20th century and has now been digitally indexed.

He said: "In 1972 I noticed large areas of the town centre were about to be cleared for building the stretch of ring road from Stafford Street, crossing over Broad Street, Walsall Street, Bilston Street and Cleveland Road round to Dudley Road.

"Whole streets would disappear, with houses, shops, pubs, public buildings and other landmarks.

"I've been collecting old photographs and postcards of the town from junk shops, antique dealers, postcard dealers and online auctions and now have thousands of images, all stored digitally and indexed for quick retrieval.

"Members of the group also send me their photographs to be added to the collection – my policy is to make all images available to everyone, preferably online."

Online there are images from the collection of the late Stanley Webb, who was a local transport enthusiast and historian. .

David Clare wrote the Wolverhampton: Photographic Memories book, originally published in 2005, which contains 75 detailed period photographs of the city.

The Wolverhampton in Old Photographs online group was set-up four years ago by Nigel Caddick. New members are welcome and are invited to apply to join.

Queen Square looking towards Darlington Street

The Midland Counties Penn Road dairy – built in the 30s

Have a say on Black Country's future

Commercial feature

People from across the Black Country are being encouraged to have their say on a review of the Black Country Core Strategy.

Views are needed on how Black Country authorities can best meet housing, economic development and transport needs, as well as protecting the local environment to help shape the future of the area.

Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton councils are all working together to achieve the very best future for local communities through the strategy which is a key planning and regeneration tool for the whole of the Black Country.

Investment

It plans for the area's future local development needs and directs services to the right locations to meet local needs. It also makes sure the necessary level of investment is attracted to create jobs and wealth in our region.

The current strategy was adopted by the four councils in 2011.

It has shaped the housing, industrial and retail growth of the area, whilst protecting the environment and greenbelt. It has also been successful in supporting regeneration for the past six years.

The strategy now needs to be reviewed to meet the new challenges and opportunities for the coming years, up to 2036.

A public consultation will make sure that everyone across the Black Country has the opportunity to have their say on the plans for the area.

The new core strategy will provide the framework for growth and development across the Black Country up to 2036.

It is really important that people who live and work in the area help shape it, so it reflects the aspirations of local people.

There are ten key issues that people's views are being sought on: meeting housing needs, supporting the economy, supporting town centres, protecting the environment, reviewing the green belt, keeping the Black Country connected, providing community facilities to support growth, people's health and wellbeing, working with our neighbours and regeneration across the Black Country.

Around 78,000 new homes need to be built in the Black Country over the next 20 years. There are enough brownfield sites to deliver around 56,000 homes, but new plots of land need to be found for an extra 22,000 homes as the population and economy of the area continues to grow.

There is also a need to find new employment land to expand the economy and create jobs. We need to decide where this development should go.

Making the most of brownfield land remains the top priority, however, in the coming decades sites like this are going to run out and the green belt will need to be reviewed to find more development sites to meet future needs.

Decisions also need to be made about the infrastructure required to support new development, including transport, schools and shops.

The consultation is open until September 8 2017. It's easy to take part by visiting blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk where all the documents are available to read and people can fill in a questionnaire online.

A leaflet, which includes a prepaid questionnaire, is also available at local libraries. Please email blackcountrycorestrategy@dudley.gov.uk or call 01384 814136 for more details.

Consultation events will be running across the Black Country throughout the consultation period, dates and venues for these are detailed below.

As part of the consultation, there is also a "Call for Sites" where people can put forward areas of land they feel may be suitable for development.

When the consultation closes all feedback will be collated, considered and used to help develop the next stage of the strategy – which will identify key locations for future development.

The views of local people will help plan for the very best future for the Black Country.

Views are being sought on how best to protect the environment as the strategy is reviewed

The strategy will also look at retail growth, employment and the economy

The Black Country needs your voice

Have your say!

Give us your views on housing, employment, transport and the local environment to help the area move forward.

The Black Country Core Strategy is a regeneration plan which sets out the future development of the area.

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Don't miss your chance to have your say by visiting blackcountrycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk or emailing blackcountrycorestrategy@dudley.gov.uk to give us your views

Consultation closes September 8 2017

Black Country | Core Strategy
Planning for the future of the Black Country

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Walsall Council
City of Wolverhampton Council
Black Country - See it in colour

Vintage items for modern kitchens

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

with John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips

CONTINUING our 'vintage home' theme this week I thought we would head into the kitchen and see what could be added in terms of old-fashioned style.

Let's start with furniture – and there is a wide range to choose from including Welsh dressers, kitchen tables and old wooden cupboards.

Many people are moving away from the standard 'fitted' kitchen and opting instead for a free-standing approach which allows you to combine old and new items for a truly individual look.

Nothing is nicer in a modern kitchen, providing you have the room, than a vintage farmhouse-style table complete with chairs (the latter don't have to be identical, it's nice to mix and match).

Welsh dressers are not just attractive, they provide some very useful storage space and can prove a real focal point if their racks are filled with colourful plates and pieces of vintage china.

Wooden cupboards can be painted to fit in with a colour scheme and for extra seating why not go for an old church pew?

If it doesn't fit you can get a carpenter to reduce its size.

Wall-mounted plate racks are extremely useful, as are butchers blocks, and old milk churns make great stools if you add some padded seating!

Fill shelves and other available spaces with old bain-maries, cow creamers and china jugs and use vintage storage pots for wooden spoons and other utensils (see, there IS a use for the pot that has lost its lid!).

Glass bottles look lovely displayed on a kitchen window-ledge.

Potted herbs can also look attractive placed in vintage dishes.

For the kitchen walls, look out for old metal advertising signs and vintage clocks.

And additionally see if you can find an old picnic hamper in which to store tea-towels.

Happy vintage shopping!

• Perry and Phillips hold valuation days, for sale items only, every Wednesday from 10am until 4pm. The next Perry and Phillips sale of antiques and collectibles takes place at the Mill Street saleroom in Low Town, Bridgnorth, on Tuesday, October 3. Viewing will be during the weekend and on Monday and also from 10am on auction day.
• New sale bidders are advised to attends the saleroom early on auction day to register and be allocated a bidding number.
• Perry and Phillips hold sales on the first Tuesday of every other month.

Popularity of coffee showing no signs of waning

So much choice with coffee

MY son took me for a coffee on Saturday morning.

We went to a new coffee shop in Stafford, no bigger than my lounge at home, packed with tables and chairs.

The walls were covered with great 1950s themed black and white photos and the music was smooth. The only additional items on offer were a selection of alcoholic spirits and a sumptuous display of gelato. It was relaxed and comfortable and the coffee was fantastic.

I ordered a caramel latte but was advised that their normal latte was infused through with deep chocolate and caramel flavours and it did not disappoint.

These delightful establishments are meeting places where every age group socialise and relax.

As a young person, 30 years ago, we drank mostly tea, an occasional filtered coffee after a meal, served with milk in a jug and sugar cubes in a dish but the choice was simply black or white.

How popular has coffee become? Cappuccino (steamed foamed velvety milk poured over one shot of coffee, finished with foam and a sprinkle of chocolate powder), latte (freshly steamed milk without foam served in a tall glass with a shot of espresso coffee) and macchiato (a touch of steamed foamed milk added to a double shot of coffee), Americana (espresso diluted with hot water and without milk).

STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis

Artform

There's also espresso (one shot of espresso in a small cup), mocha (chocolate powder mixed with an espresso shot and then steamed milk and micro-foam added), frappe (cold espresso placed in a long glass with ice, and milk) and Bonbon (espresso layered over sweetened condensed milk) to name only a few of the many choices on offer.

The barista has made the production into an artform, creating designs on the surface and serving with an elegant flourish and small biscuit or truffle.

Starbucks and Costa now have drive-thrus to quench our thirst for these fashionable beverages. Not quite fast serve as each drink is made to order – but at least we do not need to stretch our legs and walk inside to order our drinks.

Petrol stations offer a limited choice from machines in the shops, for a few coins we can enjoy a reasonably tasty cappuccino to take on our way, no longer a need for the thermos flask.

Most of us own a coffee machine with pods or capsules of varying types, a vast choice of flavours to suit our mood and taste and for ease there is now a wide choice of instant versions.

Café culture has changed, go and visit your local establishments, there are plenty to choose from, and sample a coffee type you have never tried before.

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Long-term exposure to the stress hormone can lead to chronic pain

Don't overdo it when practising yoga at home

Are your everyday habits putting posture at risk?

Using a smartphone to send emails can cause postural problems

LONG hours at a desk, slouching over laptops, lugging half our worldly belongings around in a handbag slung over one shoulder (the same one) time after time...

Most of us are aware thatwe're doing a lot of things daily that aren't very good for our posture – and this can lead to things like back pain, tense, aching shoulders and sore necks.

Around 28 million people in the UK suffer with chronic pain, and back pain accounts for a large chunk of this.

"Good posture is important on many levels," adds osteopath and biomechanics expert Claire McKenna. "Not only is it important to reduce the effects of load on the muscular skeletal system, it also influences the respiratory system, the cardiovascular system and the neurological system – essentially, all areas of the body. Poor posture can lead to digestive issues and problems in the pelvis and the gut, as well as respiratory issues following on from changes to the diaphragm, and headaches and upper back and neck pain due to muscle tightness."

But what about the less obvious things that might be damaging our posture on a regular basis? Here are 9 common – but less obvious – posture pitfalls to be aware of:

By Abi Jackson

1. Using a smartphone to send emails

"We typically forward-bend our neck when using a smartphone, rather than holding it up in front of us. This repeated forward bending can cause postural problems. The first sign will typically be an aching in the necks," says Tim Allardyce, clinical director at Surrey Physio.

2. Loading the dishwasher

"Try to squat every time you load and unload the dishwasher. It's great for toning the legs and butt, and will save extra pressure through your back."

3. Wearing ill-fitting bras

Bras need to fit properly so your shoulders don't take all the strain.

4. Stress

"Don't forget how stress can affect your posture. In stressful situations, the added level of stress means the way you hold yourself is very different," says Claire. "Stress increases your acceptance to pain – initially, in the short-term, the effect of adrenaline on the nervous system means you probably don't feel pain developing. But the long-term effects of the stress hormone can lead to chronic pain.

5. Picking up toddlers and babies

"Back pain is very common when pregnant and following the birth of the baby, while it can be made worse if you're not using the right technique to pick up your child and when breastfeeding," says leading osteopath, acupuncturist and masseur, Garry Trainer.

6. Wearing flat pumps and sandals

"People tend to wear flat pumps in the summer, which aren't great for your arches. That collapse [in the arch] then goes on to affect the ankles, knees and hips and pelvis," says Claire.

7. Overdoing it in your yoga class

"While the benefits of yoga can be exceptional, you do need to be careful with some movements, especially repeated forward bending if you have a weak back, so moves like the Downward Dog, or 'standing forward bend' are to be done with caution," says Tim.

8. Gardening

"Gardening does tend to get people in bad postural positions for long periods," says Tim. "While we encourage exercise and getting outdoors, try not to put your body under too much strain."

9. Carrying heavy rucksacks

"Be aware of the influence of the rucksack on the spine; we tend to hunch forward due to the weight of the bag. Don't have a bag that is too heavy," says Claire..

The Ticket

PINK GETS THE PARTY STARTED INSIDE

THEATRE + TV GUIDE + PUZZLES + LISTINGS

COMMERCIAL FEATURE

TRADITIONAL REAL ALE PUB

Manager Mandy always ensure a warm welcome to customers old and new at the Waggon & Horses in Oldbury.

Waggon & Horses also showcase all the major sporting events from Football to Boxing all featured on Sky Sports, BT Sports and Box Nation. For those who like 'doing' rather than 'watching' there is the availability of the Pool Table.

The pub itself boasts a wide range of ciders, lagers, wines and spirits including 'Real Ales' which they rotate weekly. Regulars very often enjoy ales such as Bathams, AJ Ales, Oakham, JHB, Stairway To Heaven and MA Pardoes Entire, Plus many more!.

The pub also run a loyalty scheme which means customers get 10p back on their card for every pound spend.

The pub also has regular live entertainment over weekends and also offers a FREE Juke box

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Raise Your Glass as Pink heads to V

The big decision for headliner Pink won't be what to include in her main stage set at V. It'll be what to leave out.

The seller of around 50 million albums and winner of three Grammys, one Brit, a Daytime Emmy and six MTV Video Music Awards has been working on her upcoming seventh album, Beautiful Trauma, which is out in October.

And when it comes to choosing her set list, she'll have to choose from six albums and 35 singles.

The hit-maker has scored some of the most important singles of the 2000s, including Get The Party Started, Who Knew, So What, Raise Your Glass, Perfect, Try, Just Give Me A Reason and Just Like Fire.

She has become increasingly successful throughout her career and her most recent studio album, The Truth About Love, was a number one in the USA, Canada, across Europe and in New Zealand.

It was released five years ago and looked at love, relationships, feminism, sexual prowess and social exclusion. She collaborated with Eminem, Lily Allen and Nate Ruess, from American band Fun.

A huge world tour followed, taking Pink through America, Australia and Europe.

She has since had a second child, a son, Jameson, to go with her daughter, Willow, and enjoyed time at home with her husband, Carey Hart, the professional motocross racer. The singer, described as the most trailblazing artist of her generation, lists Madonna and Janis Joplin as her two biggest heroes and she in turn has inspired Katy Perry, Kesha and Rihanna.

She has also acquired a new hobby, cultivating an organic vineyard in southern California after visiting leading wineries around the world. She describes her passion for wine as her 'dirty little secret' and says she started by taking online courses.

After that, she learned about pruning vines by taking her Beck album, listening to it through earphones and spending days pruning. Pink says she loved the ability to work for eight hours with nature and pruning quickly became her favourite thing.

She developed her 25-acre estate, which includes Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Malbec, Grenache and Grenache Blanc. Her love of wine, however, has been a long-term thing. When she burst onto the scene at the end of the 1990s, her rider would include a bottle of Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

She told Decanter magazine: "When I made my [first] rider, I was 20 and I just put Châteauneuf-du-Pape on there because that was the wine that made me love wine."

Since then, when she's been travelling the world, she's visited some of the best wineries that there are. She admits she doesn't know too much about English wine – but is hoping to try a little after she headlines V.

Earlier this year, Pink teamed up with Sia to release a new song, Waterfall. They worked with Norwegian songwriters Stargate on the track. Stargate have previously written hits for Beyonce, Rihanna and Fifth Harmony.

Time to think Pink as the US superstar headlines one of the top festivals

Pink works hard to stay out of the Hollywood bubble and she has been a formidable campaigner for women's rights. On social media and in interviews, she has lashed out at body shamers and lambasted those who are judgemental about women's figures.

At the BMI Pop Awards, she said: "I don't take well to bullying. I never have. I'm not a person that will be bullied. I'm not a person that will stand by watching other people bullied.

"I am a girl, I have feelings and people think I take no sh*t and I'm tough, tougher than nails, but I'm a human being.

"I think people have gotten it wrong. They think their opinion matters and holds weight and I don't know where or why they're giving themselves so much credit, you know?

"So I thought it was important for me to remind them that I don't care. My life is full, I like food a lot and I really like to cook, I like to live, I find joy in that and were doing alright in the Hart household."

Pink has been lauded by critics for being that rarest of creatures – a true artist.

While other stars have been criticised for oversinging, being unable to sing or being vocal lightweights, Pink has maintained a brilliant career by being an authentic, powerhouse vocalist. One of the singers on whom she had the greatest impact was Adele, who saw her as a teenager on the Missundaztood tour, at Brixton Academy. Adele rated it as one of the defining moments of her life and said: "I had never heard, being in the room, someone sing like that live. I remember sort of feeling like I was in a wind tunnel, her voice just hitting me. It was incredible."

> *People think I take no sh*t and I'm tough, but I'm a human being*

SUPERBOWL

Adele isn't the only one to credit Pink's work as being inspirational – she's also loved by Demi Lovato, Kelly Clarkson, Taylor Swift and more.

Pink has also rushed to the defence of other female stars, including Lady Gaga who was criticised for copying her Superbowl performance by 'flying' through the air.

She took to Instagram using the hashtag #womensupportingwomen to support Lady Gaga and wrote: "Her voice was powerful and beautiful, her outfits were on point, choreography stellar, her heart was in it and she sang about love and inclusiveness, all in front of millions and millions of people."

Pink will be doing something similar this weekend – her fans can't wait.

● **For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**

The animals - a not-so-subtle clue to the title of the band's biggest hit The Size of a Cow

Booking in to relive those Wonder years

SOLD out football stadia and number one hits – for a while, The Wonder Stuff became the region's biggest musical export since Slade and Led Zeppelin.

Led by the tousle-haired Miles Hunt, The Eight Legged Groove Machine became Top of the Pops habitués as they escaped their native Stourbridge and took on the world. Hunt, who for 22 years has lived in the Shropshire Hills, wrote instantly accessible songs that resonated with indie kids around the UK.

And though their first two albums were successful – The Eight Legged Groove Machine went to number 18 on the chart while Hup went to number five – it was their latter years, from 1990 to 1994, that brought them their greatest commercial success.

Their third album, Never Loved Elvis, was a number three hit and spawned the top five single Size Of A Cow while the successor, Construction For The Modern Idiot, also hit number four on the chart in 1993.

Successful albums weren't the only way of calibrating their success. The Wonder Stuff also filled Walsall's Bescot Stadium, packing 18,000 'Stuffies' into their local football club.

When they'd finally had enough, they did so in style. As they headlined a sold out Phoenix Festival with actress Anna Friel looking on, there were echoes of a lyric from the song Here Comes Everyone, which featured on Never Loved Elvis.

While The Wonder Stuff's 1990-1994 era coincided with their most successful age, it was also Hunt's unhappiest in the band. "I didn't enjoy any of it," he says.

Two years ago, Hunt chronicled The Wonder Stuff's early years in his book The Wonder Stuff Diaries '86-'89. In August, Hunt will publish the two compendium volumes, the first covering the years '90-'91 and the second covering the band's exit, '92-'94.

In '90-'91, Hunt picks up where he left off. Having lost an original member, Rob 'The Bass Thing' Jones, at the end of 1989 Hunt recalls the subsequent months pondering how the band might recover from such a blow.

Hunt says: "If my first book of diaries represented the ascent of The Wonder Stuff then this book represents the levelling out, the getting used to how things are going to be from here on in."

The latter book marks an era in which the band were enormously successful – but remarkably dysfunctional and unhappy. Hunt doesn't hide his disaffection with the band.

He says: "No matter how many records an artist sells it will never sate the hunger of the business end of the music business. It's a dreary environment for a creative person to find him or herself in and it would've took a much smarter person than I was back in the early 1990's to have got the balance right."

Hunt's life between 1990 and 1994 was utterly extraordinary. Having grown up and been inspired by his uncle, Bill, who was the keyboard player in ELO and Wizzard, he moved to Stourbridge at the age of 18 or 19 and hung out with mates who later formed Pop Will Eat Itself. The rest, as his diaries attest, is history. The diaries, collectively, chart The Wonder Stuff's remarkable rise.

ANDY RICHARDSON

The Wonder Stuff filled Walsall's Bescot Stadium

Miles Hunt at the Literary Festival in Wolverhampton

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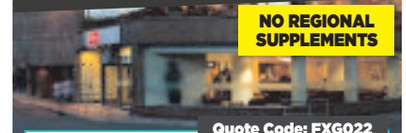

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SATURDAY'S TV AUGUST 19

CHOICE

Len Goodman

Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme
(Channel 4, 9pm)
New series. The former Strictly Come Dancing judge hosts a lyrical game show, in which two would-be poets battle it out through three rhyme-based challenges in a bid to claim a place in the final round, where they could win a holiday. Each competitor receives help from two celebrity assistants, who are on hand to back-up their assigned contestant in a variety of themed tasks.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nadiya's British Food Adventure. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Final Score. **5.15 Film:** Toy Story. (1995) Pixar animated adventure, with the voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen.

6.30 BBC News.

6.40 Regional Programme.

6.45 Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme. New series. The former Strictly Come Dancing judge hosts a lyrical game show, in two teams of celebrities help a pair of would-be poets battle through four rhyme-based challenges.

7.20 Pointless Celebrities. David Coulthard, Mark Webber, Allan McNish, Claire Williams, Murray Walker, Nigel Mansell, Christian Horner and Suzi Perry take part in a Formula One-themed edition of the quiz. (R)

8.05 Who Dares Wins.

8.45 Casualty. Medics from Holby head for France to offer their expertise to migrants stranded at a refugee camp. There, Alicia takes a shine to British medic Cameron Hamilton, who has been on the scene for a while, helping the camp's women and children. Meanwhile, Dylan finds himself becoming emotionally involved in the plight of two Sudanese orphans, who have fallen prey to ruthless people-traffickers, and back at the hospital, Connie is shocked to learn Sam has resigned and seems to have disappeared – taking Grace with him.

9.35 Mrs Brown's Boys. Agnes ends up at the wrong venue after trying to gatecrash Maria's hen party. She then tries to impress the bride-to-be's mother during a dinner date, but the evening ends in chaos. (R)

10.05 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.

10.25 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights from the latest Premier League.

11.50 People Just Do Nothing. New series. The spoof documentary going behind the scenes at pirate radio station Kurupt FM returns, as a rival station emerges, and Grindah spirals out of control.

12.20 Film: Tron: Legacy. (2010) **2.15** Weather for the Week Ahead.

BBC2

6.00 Coast. (R) **7.00 Film:** Return of the Bad Men. (1948) **8.30 Film:** Great Day in the Morning. (1956) **10.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **11.00** Ulster Derby Highlights. **12.00** Nigel and Adam's Farm Kitchen. (R) **1.00** Wanted Down Under. (R) **1.45 Film:** Forbidden Planet. (1956) Sci-fi drama, starring Walter Pidgeon. **3.20** Mastermind. (R) **3.50** University Challenge. (R) **4.20** Only Connect. (R) **4.50** Gardeners' World. (R) **5.50** The Big Family Cooking Showdown. (R)

6.50 Proms Extra. Baritone singer Roderick Williams and composer Hannah Kendall join host Katie Derham in the studio. Tonight, she revisits Rachmaninov's Symphony No 2 in E minor, which the Scottish Symphony Orchestra performed as part of Prom 37 last Sunday, and the Aurora Orchestra's rendition of Beethoven's Eroica from Prom 10. Also featured is Prom 41's Passages, by Ravi Shankar and Philip Glass, performed by the Britten Sinfonia and Karen Kamensek alongside Shankar's daughter, the sitar virtuoso Anoushka Shankar.

7.30 Welcome to Edinburgh.

8.00 Iolo's Great Welsh Parks. Iolo Williams explores Margam Country Park on the outskirts of Port Talbot, which feature lakes and mature woodland with three species of deer and 11 species of bats.

8.30 Dad's Army. Captain Mainwaring devises a cunning new way of foiling Hitler's invasion plans – but it results in Pike getting trapped in the middle of a minefield. (R)

9.00 Film: The Lady in the Van. (2015) The true story of writer Alan Bennett's friendship with an eccentric homeless woman, whom he befriended in the 1970s before allowing her to park her dilapidated Bedford van outside his Camden home, where she ended up staying for 15 years. Comedy-drama, starring Maggie Smith.

10.40 Being Alan Bennett. Cameras follow the author during key moments of his 75th year, revealing the apparent contradictions in his personality as he performs civic functions and prepares his new play. (R)

11.40 Film: The History Boys. (2006) Comedy drama, with Richard Griffiths.

1.30 Film: Henry V. (1989)

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Sooty. (R) **6.30** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.25** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.40** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Judge Rinder. (R) **10.20** Gok's Lunchbox. (R) **11.15** 1000 Heartbeats. (R) **12.15** ITV News; Weather. **12.25** The Chase. (R) **1.25** Joanna Lumley's Postcards. (R) **1.55** Tipping Point. (R) **3.00** Midsomer Murders. (R) **5.00** Little Big Shots USA.

6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.05 ITV News; Weather.

6.20 You've Been Framed! Bounces Back! Harry Hill narrates another 60-minute special edition of the comical clip show, applying his unique brand of silly, satirical commentary to a selection of hilarious hi-jinks captured on video by viewers at home. (R)

7.15 Catchphrase. Stephen Mulhern hosts the game show, asking three contestants to "see it and say it" as they try to guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues. After the first elimination, the two remaining players battle to reach the Super Catchphrase round, where one of them could win £50,000. Last in the series.

8.00 Film: The Amazing Spider-Man. (2012) A gifted teenager investigates the secrets hidden in his dead parents' past, leading him to a mysterious corporation and an incident that imbues him with superhuman powers. A personal tragedy drives him to use his new-found abilities to fight crime, and he is soon drawn into a deadly battle against a former colleague of his father, who has undergone a devastating transformation of his own. Superhero adventure reboot, starring Andrew Garfield, Emma Stone and Rhys Ifans.

10.35 ITV News; Weather.

10.50 Film: The World Is Not Enough. (1999) James Bond is assigned to protect an oil heiress from an infamous terrorist planning to destroy a pipeline. Spy adventure, with Pierce Brosnan, Robert Carlyle and Sophie Marceau.

1.10 Jackpot247. **3.00** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 Motor Sport: Mini Challenge. **6.45** Triathlon: Long Course Weekend. **7.40** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.25** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.55** The Simpsons. (R) **11.25** The Simpsons. (R) **11.55** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **12.50** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.25** Four in a Bed. (R) **1.55** Four in a Bed. (R) **2.30** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.00** Four in a Bed. (R) **3.35** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.35** Big House, Little House. **5.35** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Britain at Low Tide. Last in the series. (R)

8.00 Child Genius: The Final. Richard Osman hosts the final stage of the week-long contest, once again serving as quizmaster as five of Britain's brightest young minds battle it out to enter the final round, and secure a chance at the title. The first part of the final sees the contestants demonstrating their mastery of a degree-level specialist subject of their choice. The subjects are Edward Jenner: Medical Innovation and Methodology in the late 18th Century, Pre-Socratic Philosophy, Military Campaigns of the Yellow Turban Rebellion – 184-205CE, Martin Luther King Jr, and London in 1666: Society, Politics and the Urban Environment in the Year of the Great Fire. Only the two highest scoring competitors from the specialist round will make it through to the last, head-to-head buzzer contest, which will result in one youngster claiming the title of Child Genius 2017. Last in the series.

9.00 Film: The Hunger Games: Catching Fire. (2013) Sci-fi adventure sequel based on the second book in Suzanne Collins' trilogy of novels, starring Jennifer Lawrence, Liam Hemsworth and Donald Sutherland.

11.50 Film: X-Men. (2000) Mutant outsiders with strange powers fight to defend mankind from a superhuman terrorist faction. Sci-fi comic-book adventure, starring Hugh Jackman.

1.35 The Windsors. (R) **2.05** Hollyoaks. **4.10** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.05** Sarah Beeny's Double Your House for Half the Money. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.25** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.50 Film:** Igor. (2008) **12.25** Disobedient Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **1.20** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **2.20** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **3.15** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **4.15** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **5.10** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R)

6.05 The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. A Devon woman spends a night in the cells after a dispute with a neighbour who happens to be a policeman, while a York man gets an unexpected soaking after an argument. (R)

7.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Paul Bohill and Phil Short must deal with a negligent tenant who fled upon their arrival, forcing the agents to set a trap in order to evict him. Meanwhile, Brian O'Shaughnessy and Kevin Stokes chase a debt of £5,000 in Kent, before heading to Surrey to recover £11,000 owed by the owner a bespoke furniture business. Plus, Paul and Steve Pinner's patience is tested to the limit when they are sent to carry out an eviction in London. (R)

8.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Agents Stewart and Elmore face the most challenging eviction of their careers, while Brian and Del chase £2,000 worth of debt owed by a business based in Kent. (R)

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. Highlights from the latest games in the Championship, which included Sheffield United v Barnsley, Aston Villa v Norwich City, and Sunderland v Leeds United.

10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. Goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, which included Bradford City v Blackburn Rovers, and Forest Green Rovers v Yeovil Town.

10.30 Celebrity Big Brother. Highlights from Friday, including the contestants' reactions to the eviction, plus more games, gossip and diary room confessions.

11.30 Lip Sync Battle UK: Rufus Hound v Jorgie Porter. (R)

12.00 Cricket on 5. **1.00** SuperCasino. **3.10** Gotham. (R) **4.00** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **4.45** Access. **4.55** Great Scientists. (R) **5.25** Nick's Quest. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 The Brain with David Eagleman **8.00** Fossil Wonderlands: Nature's Hidden Treasures **9.00** Inspector Montalbano **10.55** Bob Monkhouse: The Last Stand **12.00** The Secret Life of Bob Monkhouse **1.25** David Bowie and the Story of Ziggy Stardust **2.30** Fossil Wonderlands: Nature's Hidden Treasures **3.30** Close

ITV2
11.40 Catchphrase **12.25** Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule **12.55** You've Been Framed! Gold **1.20** You've Been Framed! Goes Wild! **2.25 Film:** Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) **3.25** FYI Daily **3.30 Film:** Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium (2007) **4.15 Film:** St Trinian's (2007) **5.15** FYI Daily **5.20 Film:** St Trinian's (2007) **6.10 Film:** Hotel Transylvania (2012) **7.10** FYI Daily **7.15 Film:** Hotel Transylvania (2012) **8.00 Film:** Crazy, Stupid, Love (2011) **9.05** FYI Daily **9.10 Film:** Crazy, Stupid, Love (2011) **10.20** Family Guy **12.20** American Dad! **1.20** The Keith Lemon Sketch Show **2.10** Viral Tap **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
1.00 The Darling Buds of May **2.05** Agatha Christie's Marple **4.05 Film:** Carry On Camping (1969) **5.05** FYI Daily **5.10 Film:** Carry On Camping (1969) **5.55** Wycliffe **7.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **9.00** Foyle's War **11.00** Law & Order: UK **1.55** Rising Damp

ITV4
11.00 Cash Cowboys **1.00** Storage Wars **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Newbury, Newmarket and Ripon. Oli Bell and Francesca Cumani present coverage of today's meetings. **4.00** British Touring Car Championship Highlights **5.30** Storage Wars **6.00** World Series of Darts: Melbourne **10.00** Cycling: Vuelta a Espana **11.05 Film:** Blade (1998) **12.05** FYI Daily **12.10 Film:** Blade (1998)

E4
12.15 Rude(ish) Tube Shorts **12.30** The Goldbergs **3.00** The Big Bang Theory **5.30** Don't Tell the Bride **6.30 Film:** Beautiful Creatures (2013) **9.00 Film:** I Give It a Year (2013) **11.00** Gogglebox **1.05** Rude Tube: All Things Weird and Wonderful **2.15** Tattoo Fixers

Film4
11.00 Sunshine on Leith (2013) **1.00** Diary of a Wimpy Kid (2010) **2.50** Epic (2013) **4.55** Carry On Teacher (1959) **6.40** The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (2013) **8.55** Patti Cake$ Interview Special **9.00** I, Frankenstein (2014) **10.45** Attack the Block (2011) **12.30** The Windmill Massacre (2016)

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SUNDAY'S TV AUGUST 20

CHOICE

Sam Otto

The State (Channel 4, 9pm)
New series. Drama following the experiences of four British men and women who left their lives behind to join Isis in 2015. A man hoping to follow in his brother's footsteps has persuaded his best friend to join him, while a single mother hopes to provide medical aid and a teenager embraces the radical doctrines she has encountered online. The recruits cross into Syria under cover of darkness, where the men begin combat training and the women are introduced to the society's strict rules. Continues tomorrow.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** BBC News. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **2.15** Songs of Praise. **2.50** Athletics: Birmingham Grand Prix. Live coverage of the ninth round of the Diamond League season. **5.10** Celebrity Mastermind. (R) **5.40** BBC News. **5.55** Regional Programme.

6.05 Countryfile. Summer special from the Blenheim Estate in Oxfordshire. Ellie Harrison meets an aspiring actress-turned-accidental cow artist, John Craven uncovers one of the house's greatest secrets, Adam Henson brings the farmyard to the showground, and Tom Heap discovers how the estate's forests help the local community.

7.05 Fake or Fortune? New series. Fiona Bruce and art expert Philip Mould investigate a landscape that may be a lost painting by Constable, and an alternate view of his masterpiece The Hay Wain. The painting is currently owned by a Gloucestershire businessman and seems to have all the hallmarks of Constable's early sketches, as well as clear signs that it depicts the same location as The Hay Wain – but was dismissed as another artist's work 30 years previously. The case proves particularly personal for Philip, who is one of the artwork's previous owners.

8.05 Film: Far from the Madding Crowd. (2015) Premiere. A headstrong Victorian woman inherits a sheep farm in a remote area of Dorset. She struggles to maintain her independence while being courted by three very different men – a stoic farmer, a dashing, reckless soldier and a lonely older man. Period drama based on Thomas Hardy's novel, starring Carey Mulligan, Matthias Schoenaerts, Tom Sturridge and Michael Sheen.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action.

11.30 Film: Dream House. (2011) Horror, starring Daniel Craig, Naomi Watts and Rachel Weisz.

12.55 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.00** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 The Instant Gardener. (R) **7.00** Garden Rescue. (R) **7.45** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.45** The Beechgrove Garden. **9.15** Countryfile. (R) **10.15** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.45** Lorraine's Fast, Fresh and Easy Food. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** The Hairy Bikers' Pubs That Built Britain. (R) **1.30** Athletics: Birmingham Grand Prix. Live coverage of the ninth round of the Diamond League season. **2.50** Flog It! (R) **3.45** Britain's Ancient Capital: Secrets of Orkney. (R) **4.45** Equestrian.

6.50 Tribes, Predators & Me. Gordon Buchanan travels to remote regions on three continents to learn how tribal cultures hunt and live alongside dangerous animals, beginning his journey in Ecuador, where he meets a family from the Waorani tribe. They venture into the Amazon Jungle, where the Waorani hunt monkeys and wild pigs using blowpipes and sharpened sticks, and try to trap an anaconda, an animal of great spiritual significance. (R)

7.50 Meet the New Dragons. An introduction to Dragons' Den's new panellists, Tej Lalvani, CEO of vitamins company Vitabiotics, and Jenny Campbell, founder of ATM provider YourCash Europe Ltd.

8.00 Dragons' Den. New series. Evan Davis hosts the business ideas challenge, which sees vitamin company CEO Tej Lalvani and cash machine tycoon Jenny Campbell joining returning Dragons Deborah Meaden, Peter Jones and Touker Suleyman to cast an eye over more money-making schemes – with the largest investments in the show's history up for grabs. The first batch of entrepreneurs braving the den present their ideas for an allergy-friendly food range, astroturf for schools and youth centres, and a voucher code website that could revolutionise online shopping.

9.00 Astronauts: Do You Have What it Takes? New series. A group of 12 people compete against each other through six weeks of astronaut training, with the winner receiving support in pursuing a career with a space agency.

10.00 Ill Behaviour. New series. Starring Chris Geere.

11.00 Film: The Hunter. (2011) Drama, starring Willem Dafoe.

12.35 Film: Tommy. (1975) **2.10** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R)

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Sooty. (R) **6.30** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Ninjago: Rebooted. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Judge Rinder. (R) **10.20** Long Lost Family. (R) **11.20** Love Your Garden. (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.25** James Martin's French Adventure. (R) **1.00** Rebound. (R) **1.55** Tipping Point. (R) **2.55** Bear Grylls Survival School. (R) **3.25 Film:** Licence to Kill. (1989) James Bond spy thriller, starring Timothy Dalton.

6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.10 ITV News; Weather.

6.30 The Chase Celebrity Special. Bradley Walsh presents as celebrity contestants Jay Rayner, Lucy Porter, Krishnan Guru-Murthy and Steve Davis pit their wits against ruthless quiz genius the Chaser in the hope of winning a potential prize pot worth thousands of pounds. They must work as a team and play strategically to answer general knowledge questions against the clock and race down the game board to the exit without being caught.

7.30 Film: Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2. (2011) The young wizard continues his search for the artefacts containing fragments of the dark lord Voldemort's soul. Time is running out, as the evil sorcerer is aware of Harry's mission, and marshals his forces for a final, devastating attack on Harry and his friends at Hogwarts school. Conclusion of the fantasy saga, with Daniel Radcliffe, Ralph Fiennes, Rupert Grint, Emma Watson and Alan Rickman.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.15 Judge Rinder's Crime Stories. Barrister Robert Rinder examines the case of murderer Kenneth Noye, who was the target of an international manhunt after stabbing a man to death on the M25. (R)

11.15 Take Me Out. (R)

12.35 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Last Man Standing. **6.25** Last Man Standing. **6.50** Last Man Standing. **7.10** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Frasier. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) **1.35** The Simpsons. (R) **2.05** The Simpsons. (R) **2.35** The Simpsons. (R) **3.05** The Simpsons. (R) **3.35** Toy Story Toons. (R) **4.05 Film:** Toy Story That Time Forgot. (2014) Short animated comedy, with the voices of Tom Hanks and Tim Allen. **4.30 Film:** Tangled. (2010) Disney animated comedy, with the voice of Mandy Moore.

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Amazing Spaces Shed of the Year. New series. George Clarke presides over the 2017 Shed of the Year competition, beginning with the cabins and summerhouses category. Among the contenders are a mushroom-shaped shed and a pink and turquoise construction inspired by a Los Angeles pool house. This year's contest will feature a new category, for unusual sheds that push the boundaries of construction in ingenious ways.

8.00 From Russia to Iran: Crossing the Wild Frontier. New series. Levison Wood travels across the Caucasus mountain range, which run for 2600 miles across five countries on the border between Europe and Asia. The expedition begins on Russia's heavily militarised southern border, where he has to avoid the local police. The first leg of the journey takes him through the ruins of ancient civilisations, the notorious former battleground of Chechnya, and the territory of Islamist terrorists.

9.00 The State. New series. Drama following the experiences of four British men and women who left their lives behind to join Isis in 2015. The recruits cross into Syria under cover of darkness. Continues tomorrow.

10.00 Film: The Gunman. (2015) After spending years in hiding, a mercenary becomes the latest target of his former colleagues. Crime drama, starring Sean Penn and Idris Elba.

12.10 Film: Belle. (2013) **2.00** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **2.50** Gillette World Sport. **3.20** KOTV Boxing Weekly. **3.50** Location, Location, Location. (R) **4.45** Sarah Beeny's Double Your House for Half the Money. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Poppy Cat. **6.10** Little Princess. (R) **6.25** Mr Men. (R) **6.35** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.40** Milkshake! Bopping About. (R) **6.45** Simon. (R) **6.50** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.55** Wissper. (R) **7.05** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.15** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.25** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.30** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.20** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.35** Floogals. (R) **8.50** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.25** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.40** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **10.00** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **10.15** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.40** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.30** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **12.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.00** Police Interceptors: Dog Squad Special. (R) **2.00** Police Interceptors: Deadly Pursuits. (R) **3.00** Police Interceptors: Deadly Pursuits 2. (R) **3.55** Police Interceptors: Drugs Bust. (R) **4.55** 5 News Weekend. **5.00** Biggest Dog in the World. (R)

6.00 The Secret Life of Puppies: Terrible Twos. Part one of two. The return of the documentary following the early stages of dogs' lives. An English bulldog is piling on the pounds and is given a new exercise regimen. (R)

6.45 The Secret Life of Puppies: Terrible Twos. Part two of two. Big Ron makes big progress with his weight-loss programme, while eight-month-old French Bulldog Betsy turns her hand to doggy modelling. (R)

7.30 The Ant & Dec Story. Documentary celebrating much-loved duo Anthony McPartlin and Declan Donnelly, who in a career already spanning more than 25 years, have conquered almost every part of the TV schedules, from anarchic children's programmes to some of the biggest shows, including the Queen's recent birthday celebrations. Contributors include friends, fans and some of the celebrities who have fallen foul of the duo's trademark tricks, or actually found fame through their formats. (R)

9.00 Celebrity Big Brother.

10.05 Before They Were Stars. Dale Winton treks back through the TV archive to uncover embarrassing early brushes with fame endured by some of today's biggest stars.

12.05 Cricket on 5. **1.00** SuperCasino. **3.10** Gotham. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Do We Really Need the Moon? **8.00** BBC Proms 2017 **10.40** The Treasure Hunters **12.40** James May at the Edge of Space **1.10** The Rules of Abstraction with Matthew Collings **2.40** The Art of Australia **3.40** Close

ITV2
11.55 Ninja Warrior UK **1.00** Mr Bean **2.05 Film:** Honey (2003) **3.05** FYI Daily **3.10 Film:** Honey (2003) **4.00 Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **5.00** FYI Daily **5.05 Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **5.50 Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **6.50** FYI Daily **6.55 Film:** Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **8.00 Film:** The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (2006) **9.00** FYI Daily **9.05 Film:** The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (2006) **10.05** Family Guy **12.00** American Dad! **12.55** The Cleveland Show **1.50** Viral Tap **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV3
11.40 The Darling Buds of May **12.45** Heidi **2.50** Wycliffe **3.55** Foyle's War **6.00** Margery and Gladys **8.00** Midsomer Murders **10.00** Law & Order: UK **12.05 Film:** Casablanca (1942) **1.05** FYI Daily **1.10 Film:** Casablanca (1942) **2.05** Margery and Gladys **3.45** May the Best House Win **5.30** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
11.30 FYI Daily **11.35 Film:** Everything or Nothing: The Untold Story of 007 (2012) **12.15** Storage Wars: Texas **1.15** Storage Wars **1.40** The Big Fish Off **2.45** River Monsters **7.00** Cycling: Vuelta a Espana **8.00** World Series of Darts: Melbourne **11.30 Film:** Life on the Limit (2013) **12.30** FYI Daily **12.35 Film:** Life on the Limit (2013) **1.35** Quincy ME **2.25** Tommy Cooper **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.00 Made in Chelsea: Ibiza **12.00** The Goldbergs **1.00** The Big Bang Theory **7.00** The Crystal Maze: Celebrity Specials **8.00 Film:** Shallow Hal (2001) **10.15** Don't Tell the Bride **11.20** Tattoo Fixers on Holiday **12.25** Body Fixers **1.30** Gogglebox **2.30** Rude Tube: Superstars of the Web **3.25** Rude Tube **3.50** Hollyoaks

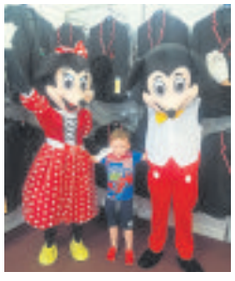
Film4
11.00 Carry On Nurse (1959) **1.00** Antz (1998) **2.40** Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters (2013) **4.45** Multiplicity (1996) **7.00** Patti Cake$ Interview Special **7.05** Hocus Pocus (1993) **9.00** The Drop (2014) **11.10** Splice (2009) **1.15** Isolation (2005) **3.10** Close

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

CC Uniforms
We have now moved

CC Uniforms formerly Rodgers and Dorrington have proudly been supplying The parents of Sandwell's School children's uniforms since 1946 (71 years) and they have now expanded to much larger premises to cope with the high demand of school clothing, the new larger premises are now at 82 Kings Square West Bromwich B70 7NW, situated in Kings Square Shopping Centre, with your back facing Iceland it is roughly 100 feet straight ahead of you towards to exit of the market.

Proud owners say exciting times are ahead and are more than pleased with the new premises allowing them to show the full range of products on offer ranging from School clothing, T-shirt printing and Work wear, plus their new range of Mascots to hire for children's parties and on top of all of that shoppers who pop along to the new store will see that all embroideries are carried out in house which is a rarity in itself these days, and now is the best time to come along and see what is on offer for the new term, for example Phoenix Collegiate have a new emblem on their Blazer.



CC Uniforms are also a council approved School wear stockist plus they accept School vouchers and now with their new website www.ccuniforms.co.uk it makes it even easier to purchase your child's uniform needs or simply follow us on Facebook wizard stitch and Print or if you would like to know anything else please call 0121 448 1199 or email cheekys7@hotmail.co.uk

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- Ocker Hill
- Moorlands
- George Salter Academy
- Phoenix Collegiate
- Oldbury College of Sport
- Ace High
- Pennyhill
- St John Bosco
- Great bridge
- Gunns Village
- Glebefields
- King George V
- All Saints
- Yew Tree
- Hateley Heath
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- Priory Primary
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- Grove Vale
- Holy Name
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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
The Pirates! In an Adventure with Scientists!, BBC2, 1.30pm
The bungling leader of a band of inept buccaneers is determined to prove his worth to his rivals and win the coveted Pirate of the Year award. Animated comedy, with the voices of Hugh Grant, Martin Freeman, Imelda Staunton and David Tennant. (2012)

TUESDAY
The Odd Life of Timothy Green, BBC2, 1.45pm
A couple bury a box containing their wishes for the perfect child they are unable to have. Soon afterwards, a mysterious boy with leaves growing from his feet shows up on their doorstep, claiming to be their son. Fantasy, with Jennifer Garner and Joel Edgerton. (2012)

WEDNESDAY
Flushed Away, BBC2, 1.35pm
A pampered pet rodent is flushed down a toilet and ends up in a vast underground rat city in the sewers of London. He is befriended by a quick-witted rat who offers to help him find his way home. Animated comedy, with the voices of Hugh Jackman, Kate Winslet, Ian McKellen and Shane Richie. (2006)

Up in the Air, Friday, BBC1, 11.50pm

THURSDAY
Cars 2, BBC2, 1.45pm
Racing car Lightning McQueen heads overseas to compete in an international grand prix, with events in Britain, Japan and Italy. He gets mixed up in international espionage when a case of mistaken identity leads to an encounter with two English spy cars. Pixar animated adventure sequel, with the voices of Owen Wilson and Michael Caine. (2011)

FRIDAY
Up in the Air, BBC1, 11.50pm
A corporate downsizing expert loves his life, detached from everyday existence and striving to achieve a personal goal of 10 million accumulated air miles. However, his lifestyle comes under threat by an up-and-coming executive with a revolutionary approach that would make his role all but obsolete. Comedy drama, starring George Clooney, Vera Farmiga, Anna Kendrick and Jason Bateman (2009)

PICK OF THE WEEK

Rory proves that laughter is the best medicine

If you saw sublime British comedy Man Up the other week on BBC Two, you might have been impressed by the frisson between Simon Pegg and Lake Bell's characters. However, doing a lot of the comedic heavy lifting was Rory Kinnear.

He's also been one of the strongest assets in the Count Arthur Strong BBC series, and as good as Michael Kitchen's Bill Tanner was in a couple of 007 adventures, after the success of recent James Bond offerings and video games, it's hard to imagine anyone else in the role.

Now Rory returns in the second edition of James Wood's period sitcom Quacks, which took a while making the leap from pilot episode to full blown series.

"I did the pilot," explains Rory. "Then it took more than a year before we were all available to get back together, which meant that James had time to work on the scripts and get everything in place. Then we could rehearse a month before we even started filming, which is an unbelievable position to be in."

There have been plenty of medical sitcoms over the years, from the Doctor on the Go series in the 1970s to Surgical Spirit a decade later. However, setting one in the 19th-century is one of the things that inspired Rory to sign up.

"I quite like doing stuff that I haven't necessarily seen before or feels reasonably distinctive, and James is so meticulous and thorough about his research that it's funny to do," he reveals.

With any period sitcom, there are bound to be comparisons with Blackadder, and use the setting as an excuse for slapstick, but Wood has managed to exploit the era itself.

As Rory explains, it was a "period of grim discovery and invention" into techniques that many 21st-century medics will take for granted. "All these people were pioneering new techniques that all of our lives have improved from, but equally there would have been plenty of failures along the way as well."

How does Quacks compare to the other projects he's worked on?

"The sets are quite lavish... Obviously having done Penny Dreadful for Showtime, that's set in a similar-ish time but a bit later. But in terms of sets and costume that have been created with this level of detail, it feels incredibly detailed and lavish."

In this week's offering, Rory is reunited with Spectre co-star Andrew Scott, in the guise of one of Blighty's best loved writers.

When Caroline (Lydia Leonard) lands an invitation to meet her hero, Charles Dickens (Scott), William (Matthew Baynton) finds himself in an awkward position when he exaggerates how much of a fan he is.

Meanwhile, John (Tom Basden) takes an orphan under his wing, and Robert (Kinnear) crosses paths with an uppity young volunteer called Florence Nightingale (Milly Thomas) who starts interfering with his work.

Dr Hendrick (Rupert Everett) is keen to curry favour with the nurse, and her influential family, so Robert has to work out how to get rid of her.

Rory Kinnear, Tom Basden and Mathew Baynton star in Quacks, Tuesday, BBC2, 10pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Streetmate
Channel 4, 5.30pm
Some readers may remember the 1998 to 2001 show in which Davina McCall played Cupid on the streets of the UK. A sort of Blind Date on the hoof, and like that matchmaking series which was revamped recently, Streetmate has also been given a new lease of life. With Ms McCall busy reuniting relatives on Long Lost Family, presenting duties are now courtesy of Scarlett Moffatt. Stripped across the week, the new series should help boost little Ms Moffatt's fanbase, and prove an engaging way to ease down after a hard day.

Jamie's Quick & Easy Food
Channel 4, 8pm
New series. Jamie Oliver offers viewers the ultimate set of go-to recipes for quick and easy-to-remember cooking having developed a collection of tasty dishes that each use just five ingredients, producing stress-free meals perfect for busy days and for those people who don't have the time or energy to devote to complicated cooking. On the menu in the first edition are seared scallops with black pudding, mashed potatoes and peas, as well as egg and mango chutney flatbreads, rib-eye steak, and an almond pastry puff.

TUESDAY
The Big Family Cooking Showdown
BBC2, 8pm
As Zoe Ball and Nadiya Hussain's culinary competition continues, the Karim family from west London go up against the Dawes from Hampshire. Aunt Zakila is queen of the kitchen in the Karim's household, but will her spice mix leave the judges wanting more when they visit the family at home? Ellie Dawes and her scientist boyfriend Sam share a passion for food, but it remains to be seen whether their bold use of ingredients will be a step too far for judges Rosemary Shrager and Giorgio Locatelli.

WEDNESDAY
Love Your Garden
ITV, 8pm
It's the last in the current series – and to mark the occasion, Alan Titchmarsh and the team are carrying out not one but two makeovers. They're in Nottingham to meet Marcellus Baz, who had something of a misspent youth, getting involved in gangs and pretty crime. However, the discipline of boxing helped to turn his life around, and now, at the age of 41, he's doing the same for troubled teens at his gym. Marcellus would love to turn the dank outside yard into a garden where the kids can learn to grow and cook healthy fruit and vegetables. But what he doesn't know is that as a thank you for all his hard work, Alan and co are planning to give him a new-look garden at home too.

THURSDAY
Who Do You Think You Are?
BBC1, 8pm
TV presenter Fearne Cotton traces her family history, paying particular attention to her great grandfather Evan Meredith. Evan had worked down a coal mine from the age of 13 before training as a chemist, but one part of his life he was unwilling to talk about were his experiences in the First World War. Fearne delves into this period and discovers how he risked his freedom to follow his conscience. Turning to her mother's side of the family, she uncovers an ambitious ancestor.

Who Do You Think You Are?, Thursday, BBC1, 8pm

FRIDAY
The Crystal Maze
Channel 4, 8pm
New series. Richard Ayoade guides members of the Watson family through the Aztec, Medieval, Industrial and Future zones, inviting 22-year-old captain Catriona, her mother Fiona and three others to tackle a range of skill, mystery, physical and mental challenges to win some all-important crystals. The players need secure as many as possible in order to maximise the amount of time they can spend within the legendary Crystal Dome for their final test.

Celebrity Big Brother: Live Final
Channel 5, 9pm
Fifteen famous faces entered the Celebrity Big Brother house 24 days ago, and it wasn't long before some of them began to crack under the pressure. However, the tears and tantrums are almost over for another series as Emma Willis (who will be glad for a break having fronted the regular show over the summer too), whittles the remaining housemates down one by one until the winner is announced. Coleen Nolan defeated Jedward to triumph in the 19th edition of CBB back in January, but who will succeed the singer as the champ tonight and pocket £50,000 for their chosen charity?

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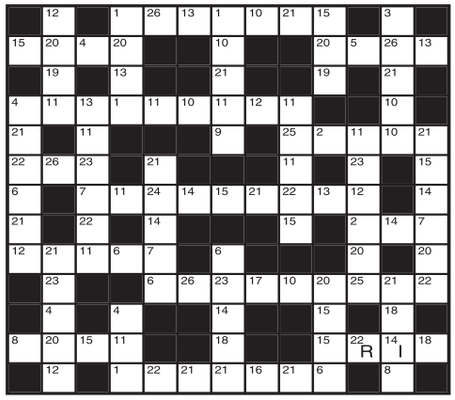
BRAIN GYM

No.443

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



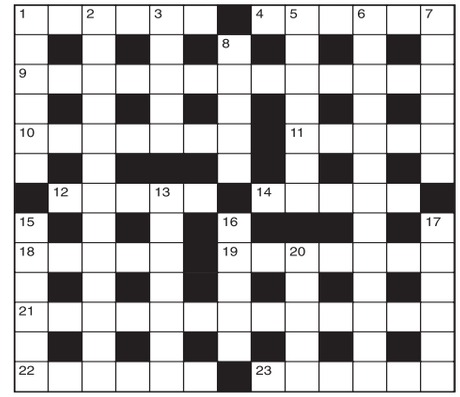
1	14 I
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22 R
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Y	U	D	V	F	N	C	K	L	W	G	Q	T
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
E	J	O	P	A	R	B	Z	M	X	H	I	S

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. They're purely symbolic (6)
4. Free with money (6)
9. Promises, but only donates a single weapon (5,4,4)
10. Assemble for a prayer (7)
11. Of one's birth in S Africa (5)
12. Takes in a form of food (5)
14. It's cut from the wedding cake (5)
18. All right, a sanctimonious creature (5)
19. A political favour? (7)
21. The drink to lay one low? (5-3,5)
22. Untidy arrangement that would horrify Mrs Grundy! (6)
23. Right, put one's pay around making bets (6)

Down

1. What is left (6)
2. One has to be uncommonly rich to do so (4,4,1,4)
3. Directions to prosecute follow (5)
5. The attendant's not responsible for it (7)
6. Only a few words but they may carry conviction (5,8)
7. Posers seldom resolved (6)
8. Complications that naturally go against the grain (5)
13. Small article produced by an erratic knitter? (7)
15. Call around to watch TV (4,2)
16. It has been known to be tickled to death (5)
17. Gets engaged when he is in a bit of trouble (6)
20. Mince pies having a brown colour (5)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Concealed (6)
4. Mean (6)
9. Unaided (3,4,3,3)
10. United States (7)
11. Weird (5)
12. Jumped (5)
14. Postpone (5)
18. Garret (5)
19. Superintend (7)
21. In a somersault (4,4,5)
22. Scabbard (6)
23. Bomb hole (6)

Down

1. Turkish pipe (6)
2. Discriminate (13)
3. Boredom (5)
5. Not in any place (7)
6. Confusion (13)
7. Tremble (6)
8. Attempt (5)
13. Select (4,3)
15. Sentiment (6)
16. Arbour (5)
17. Hot spring (6)
20. Anaesthetic (5)

Sudoku

1					4		6	
4		7		9				3
	6	8	7		5			4
9						4	1	
					3			
	7	4		5				8
			5		7	8	2	
5				2			4	1
	2	9	1					6

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

3	8	7	4	6	1	2	5	9
5	6	9	2	3	7	4	1	8
4	1	2	5	9	8	7	6	3
9	4	6	3	2	5	8	7	1
1	5	8	6	7	9	3	4	2
7	2	3	8	1	4	6	9	5
2	7	1	9	4	3	5	8	6
6	9	5	7	8	2	1	3	4
8	3	4	1	5	6	9	2	7

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Desk calendar; 7 Fused; 8 Gusto; 9 Run; 10 Treatment; 11 Breaks; 12 Lay off; 15 Turnstile; 17 Ski; 18 Romeo; 19 Earns; 21 Racketeering.
Down: 1 Distributors; 2 Cos; 3 Ladder; 4 Nightmare; 5 Aisle; 6 Cost of living; 7 Fence; 10 Take stock; 13 Oasis; 14 Direct; 16 Rumba; 20 Rue.
QUICK - Across: 1 Recollection; 7 Cheat; 8 Spine; 9 Pea; 10 Derringer; 11 Relish; 12 Remiss; 15 Tortoises; 17 Aim; 18 Older; 19 Limit; 21 Celebrations.
Down: 1 Recuperation; 2 Lie; 3 Entire; 4 Testiness; 5 Owing; 6 Refreshments; 7 Crawl; 10 Discourse; 13 Inapt; 14 Ostler; 16 Ridge; 20 Mat.

Quiz

1. What is patchouli?
2. What type of bird is a budgerigar?
3. Which Clockwork Orange star kills Captain Kirk in Star Trek: Generations?
4. To which group of islands do North and South Uist belong?
5. Which Italian conductor was appointed music director of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in the 1990s?
6. Who was England's last Plantagenet king?
7. A marimba is a bass variety of which instrument?
8. Which environmental pressure group was founded in the UK in 1969?
9. What is the Australian town Coober Pedy famous for mining?
10. Who succeeded Peter Taylor as permanent manager of Leicester City?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Europe and Asia; 2 Crustacean; 3 Coronation Street; 4 Norman Mailer; 5 Roger Kemble; 6 Mount Kenya; 7 Tony Blair; 8 Irish; 9 Kobe; 10 John Nash.

Niner: SUBLIMATE

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

12767 gives a girl's name,
329784 gives a second girl's name,
9755748 gives a third girl's name.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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Flavours – fresh out of Thailand

FRESH layout, fresh food and a fresh experience – one word to describe our first ever foray into the wonderful world of Thai food . . . fresh.

Having eaten a friend's Thai cuisine efforts – and very good they were too – to say we had never experienced the delicacy would be overstating the fact.

However, just like you can't beat a curry from your favourite curry house, I'm pretty sure it must be the same for Thai food having enjoyed a wonderful meal at Thai Banana Leaf in Kingswinford.

It was a special occasion, my wife's birthday – and it being on Monday – we decided to go for something a bit more relaxed and this Thai restaurant ticked the box. We were playing a bit of risky game, as our two-year-old daughter was with us. Risky because the restaurant didn't take bookings until 6pm, so it was going to be a fairly late finish. But it was a decision that paid off.

Packed with the flavour – the sea bass dish

Worth a visit – the Thai Banana Leaf

LAYOUT

We were one of two groups eating while we were there – the other being a couple – but the waitress had kindly placed us beside the fish tank, which kept our daughter entertained for ages.

The layout was how you would expect: plenty of neatly-arranged tables, oriental statues and paintings, and of course the fish tank.

We had been told Thai food lives by five fundamental taste senses in each dish – sour, sweet, salty, bitter and spicy – which was like a set of rules sent down from heaven for someone with a palate like mine.

I went for the Fisherman's Soup, a spicy mixed seafood soup with lemongrass, galangal, kaffir lime leaves and mushrooms. Handily, every dish also comes with a 'chilli' chart, which simply meant the more chillis the higher intensity. Kelly went for the deep fried spring roll duck, served with hoi sin sauce. The first thing to mention about that dish was its size. There were four spring rolls when two would probably have sufficed. It was all eaten, but someone with a smaller appetite might want to try something else.

We had asked on arrival about a children's menu and, to be fair, there is the likes of fish fingers on the starter menu which, when ordered with a side order of chips, would make a good alternative.

Annabelle has always been good at experimenting with food so we decided to give one of the main dishes a go and went for the Pud See Eaw, stir fried rice noodles with broccoli, spring green, bean sprouts and egg.

As she loves broccoli and scrambled egg, we thought it was worth a go, especially as it came with a choice of chicken, which we went for, or pork, beef, duck, prawns or a vegetarian option.

It turned out to be a great decision because she really enjoyed the combination and even gave the spring greens and bean sprouts a go.

I decided to stick to the fish theme and the seafood pad prik, stir fried seafood with red curry paste, garlic, pepper, spring onion and coriander with oyster sauce served on sizzling plate, caught my eye, while Kelly went for a whole steamed sea bass with ginger and spring onions in soy sauce.

There was so much to choose from too so, if you're not a massive seafood fan, fear not as sizzling platters, chefs specials, set menus, and noodle and rice dishes are also available.

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PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Well-presented property on a popular estate

This well-presented and modern three-bedroomed detached house in Brookfield Way, Tipton, lies in a popular estate.

It is for sale through Skitts at £159,950.

With gas central heating and double glazing throughout, it is located a short distance away from local schools, amenities and travel links. The accommodation briefly comprises a lounge, kitchen/diner, conservatory, three bedrooms, a bathroom, en-suite and a garage.

In more detail, a block paved driveway gives access to the garage and front door into the entrance porch with a door into the lounge.

This has a window to the front, a door to an under stairs storage cupboard, stairs to first floor landing and a door into the kitchen/diner.

This has a window to the rear, a range of wall and base units, a sink with a drainer and a mixer tap, an oven with an electric induction hob and an extractor fan over and sliding doors into a conservatory.

Off the first floor landing is a storage cupboard.

Bedroom one overlooks the rear and has built-in wardrobes and a door to its en-suite with a shower cubicle, wash hand basin and low level WC.

Bedroom two also overlooks the rear while bedroom three has views of the front.

The bathroom is also positioned to the front of the property, having a suite of a bath with a shower over, wash hand basin and low level WC.

Outside the frontage comprises of a full width block paved driveway, enabling ample parking space. This leads to the garage which projects out from the main property. The rear garden has a patio area and decking and is hard landscaped for ease of maintenance.

Skitts estate agents began in 1979 as a Partnership and has proudly remained so for over 37 years.

Currently, the four partners oversee eight branches and 30 staff across the West Midlands region and as such, are one of the largest independent sales and letting agencies in the area.

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Stunning property with six bedrooms

WEST BROMWICH
£385,000

A unique six-bedroomed detached family home in Dudley Street, West Bromwich also comes with three reception rooms, a bathroom, en-suite and a further shower room.

It is for sale through Connells at £385,000.

A stunning and very spacious property, its accommodation briefly comprises an entrance hallway, three reception rooms, a large kitchen/diner, a utility room, a downstairs cloakroom/WC, an upstairs family bathroom, an en-suite to the master bedroom, a second floor shower room, enclosed rear garden with outbuildings, off road parking to the front, double glazing and central heating.

For further information contact Connells on 0121 525 1177.

Lots of space on offer at this three storey home

OLDBURY
£157,500 <<<

This extremely spacious and well presented three-bedroomed, three storey end terrace home in Bodenham Road, Oldbury is within walking distance of local amenities and good local schools.

It is for sale through Braithwaites at £157,500.

With gas central heating and double glazing it has an entrance hall, an attractive lounge, a fitted dining kitchen, a superb double glazed conservatory, a downstairs WC, three good sized bedrooms, a bathroom, a pleasant good sized rear garden, block paved driveway providing off road parking for vehicles and additional parking to the rear.

To book a viewing, contact Braithwaites on 0121 421 1180 or visit www.braithwaites-estate-agents.co.uk

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Excellent semi with off road parking and garden

This three-bedroomed semi-detached property in Westbourne Road, Wednesbury is a well presented home in a popular area.

WEDNESBURY
£180,000

It is for sale through Skitts at £180,000.

Its accommodation briefly comprises a large entrance hall with high ceilings, a reception room to the front, a reception room to rear, a large kitchen/diner with a store under the stairs, a door leading into conservatory, a large landing again with high ceilings, a large first bedroom, two other bedrooms and a bathroom with a shower cubicle.

To the front of the property is off road parking by way of a block paved driveway and to the rear is a large lawned garden with patio area.

For further information, or to book a viewing, contact Skitts on 0121 505 1818 or visit www.skitts.net

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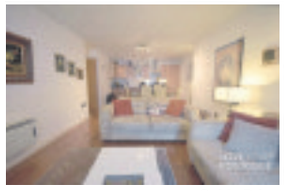

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UPVC or Wooden Drop Down Loft Hatch with Easiway Aluminium Ladder
£185 fitted
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All installations and repairs
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Our Specialist Section offers you a wide range of local businesses and tradesman to deal with your needs and requirements.

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House & Garden Clearance
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ClassifiedAds

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Part of Dignity plc. A British Company.

1 Family

elderly & disabled

MOBILITY SCOOTER 4 wheels, 4mph, as new, done 1 mile, fits in car boot. Cost £550 will accept £250. Cannock 07967 658821.

MOBILITY SCOOTER

Category 3 Galaxy Plus mobility scooter. Used 3 times. As new. Approx 30 mile long range between battery charge. Cost when purchased £2280.

£1,300 ono.

01902 758288.

2 Leisure Time

car boot sales

GIANT THURSDAY CAR BOOT SALE
This Thursday and every Thursday
6am - 2pm at
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Tel: 07831 192 116

CAR BOOT SALES!
Every Sunday
and Bank Holiday Monday
Muckley Corner, Hall Lane, Lichfield, WS14 0BE
Booters £4
6.00am-2pm
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AVONDALE OFFSPRAY beautiful condition, serviced 2016, must sell due to ill health, **£2,750 ono.** Cooler box, Outwell 12 v / 24acdc, runs well **£35.** Awning, camper Rally 390, with poles outside **£100.** 3 folding chairs **£3 each.** Folding metal table **£10.** **0121 5687442. After 3pm.**

BARGAIN

ELDDIS PEUGEOT BOXER MOTORHOME

4 Berth, 57 plate, 6 months MoT, four brand new tyres, 12,000 miles on clock,

In very good condition.

£16,499 ono.

0121 531 7005.

07884 302216.

PRE-OWNED CARAVAN with decking. Inc all 2017 site fees, full 12 month season. Payment options available (T&Cs). £10,995. Call Paul on 07960 944721 for details.

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WANTED ALL CARAVANS
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holidays

travel abroad

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mind, body & soul

massage

MOBILE Aromatherapy Massage Therapist Home / Hotel. To book appointments call 07437 569187.

what's on

book fair

BOOK FAIR Kinver Community Centre, DY7 6ER, Sunday 20th August, Est 1979, Waverley. Next antique Fair 3rd September. Stalls available for all. Home made refreshments. Call 0121 550 4381

table top sale

HILL TOP METHODIST CHURCH
New Street, Hill Top
West Bromwich
B70 0HW
TABLE TOP SALE
Saturday, August 19.
9am to 1pm
£5 per table
To book ring Ann
0121 556 4726 or
07896 163130.

3 Home & Services

furniture

Furniture not sold, why not donate it?
katharine house hospice
Reg charity number: 1011712
We can turn your quality used furniture into 1st class care for patients at Katharine House
Call us now on 01785 760715
for details or to arrange a FREE collection

DUNELM SILVER dressing table, chest of drawers and smaller chest of drawers. £75 ono. 07503 194132.

FURNITURE NOT SOLD? Donate it to Katharine House Hospice. We collect for free. Telephone Cannock 01543 466885, Stafford 01785 247630, House clearance service 01785 760715.

household appliances

A MUST CLEAR OUT
Cookers, Fires, Autos, Tumble dryers, Built in ovens, Hobs, Fridge freezers, lots more at low prices.
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24 - 26 church street, Bilston (opposite town hall).

in your garden

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Bloxwich Fencing Ltd
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items for sale

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UPVC doors and windows
New and Used
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Lichfield Road, Brownhills, WS8 6JZ
01543 453222
07956 627367

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED
That the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

ASH RECLAMATION new and used building materials, upvc doors and windows 01543 453222.

ELECTRICAL ITEMS pressure washer £50. snow blower £100, 2 battery drills £30ea, lawn mower as new, £40, wheel clamp £25. Cannock 07967 658821.

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

items wanted

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Cash paid £300+ per ounce for 9 car- at scrap gold. Any amount collected!
Sovereigns £200+ each, Watches, Coins, Medals & more
Highly Recommended!
01922 495066 or 07971 783206

WANTED MOBILITY SCOOTERS
Cash paid for your unwanted or non working mobility scooters. Will collect at your convenience.
Call Lichfield
01543 252538/ 07769 263312

READERS ARE ADVISED to carefully consider all of their options before agreeing to the sale of any of their items.

WANTED
STAMP COLLECTIONS BY
PRIVATE COLLECTOR
CASH PAID
07867
477214

WANTED

TRAILER WANTED for small quad bike. 07710 997291.

WANTED
VINTAGE TOYS
Starwars, He-Man, Ghost Busters, NinjaTurtles, Corgi or Dinky.
All vintage toys considered, good prices paid.
Unleash the cash in your loft.
Call Tony on 07812 903338.

loans

READERS ARE REMINDED that they may require professional advice before entering into obligations.

pc's, laptops & accessories

CLIENT COMPUTERS

Certified technician & Microsoft partner.
Repair & maintain laptops and PCs. In West Midlands.
Virus removal, broken screens, wifi.
Windows problems etc.
Home visits or bring to me.
Long established.
Laptops available.
0121 556 9481

CLIENT COMPUTERS Certified technician and microsoft partner. Repair and maintain laptops and pcs. Virus removal, broken screens, wifi, windows problem etc. Laptops available. 0121 556 9481

t.v. / home entertainment

service

AERIAL AND TV SPECIALIST Any TV Repairs, Plasma, LED etc, CCTV cameras supplied & fitted. Any area. Free Estimates. 7 days. Digital aerials, Sky installation. Wall mounts / TV setups. 07850 330251.

specialists at your service

aerials

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AerialsFitted.com
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01543 439095 • 01922 716029

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Steve - AA Digital Aerials

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

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alarms/security

PREMIER ALARMS
Supplied and Fitted £249
Servicing and Repairs
12 Months Warranty
All areas covered
All quotes beaten!
Call: 0121 601 9791

appliance repairs

A SAME DAY REPAIR - Cookers Autos Fridges Vacs and Micros. Call 07900 578897 / 07801 746853.

bathrooms

BATHROOM DESIGN All bathrooms fitted, tiling, flooring, complete bathrooms: 07850 382548.

building services

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APPROVED CONTRACTOR
All damp problems, roofing, building & plastering work
FREE QUOTES
07538 118034 or 01902 752161

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building supplies

QUALITY DOORS AND HARDWOOD FLOORING @ low prices. Call Arnold Laver 0121 533 5428.

RECLAIMED BRICKS, Tiles, Slates, Oakbeams, Flooring, York Stone. Cawarden 01889 574066. sales@cawardenreclaim.co.uk

carpentry & joinery

CARPENTRY AND JOINERY Kitchens, fitted wardrobes, doors, flooring, staircases and refurbs. 07903 234137 or 0121 4939733.

SPR CARPENTRY Six internal pre-primed doors fully fitted from £370. 0121 5322672 or 07958 552625.

carpet fitters

A CARPETS & VINYLS supplied or just fitted, quality samples brought to your home, no job too small, free quotes call Mark 01543 820598 / 07941 619694.

fencing

PORTWAY FENCING
SPECIAL OFFER
10 Bays of quality fencing, concrete posts, gravel boards £695
Heavy duty panels supplied & fitted.
0121 531 5250 / 07866 137 656
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ClassifiedAds

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"I am extremely happy with the service I get from my Express & Star Classified Sales Representatives and would recommend them to anyone! They have done a very professional job with my website so I get online enquiries as well now."

Michael- Portway Fencing

For great business results call
01902 319 191

ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

gardening services

Landywood Tree & Landscaping Services
All garden work, tree felling/lopping, pruning, hedges trimmed, turf, patios, fencing, block-paving etc.
www.landywoodlandscaping.co.uk
01922 898 710 / 07973 177 976

H. COOPER & SON Landscaping / garden maintenance. No job too small, Free Quotes: 07904 929632.

J&B TREE CARE Landscape and Jetwashing Services. All Pesticide /Fungicide work. Free fixed quotes: 07786 166856/ 01922 449268.

gas fitting

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- Fires • Gas Checks
- Landlord Certificates
- Gas Leaks Traced

Fitted, Serviced and Repaired
Same Day Service
Free Quotes
DISCOUNTS FOR OAPs
Call: 01902 366855/ 07761 973975

READERS ARE ADVISED To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered. It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without being on the Gas Safe Register.

gates

ALL METAL GATES,RAILINGS, etc. Free quotes, also repairs & fitting. 07903 500642 24 hours.

DARLASTON FABS 30 years exp in supplying/ fitting gates and railings. Free quotes: 07497 667752.

THANK YOU CLASSIFIEDS!

I average around 1 to 2 phone calls a day from customers as a direct result of my Classified Advertising. I am very happy with my response levels.

Mr Causer.

For great business results call
01902 319 191

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handyman services

YOUR LOCAL HANDYMAN
FREE QUOTES
All work guaranteed, Most trades covered, References available on request. No job too big or too small!
CALL MIKE: 07947 621047
0121 6010479

HANDY MAN - Most trades, plumbing, heating, gardening & decorating. Gutter clean no ladders, free quotes. 07850 559315.

LOCK & CARPENTRY Plumbing, Small job specialist. Free quotes 01902 683100 or 07934 460864.

house clearances

A1 HOUSE CLEARANCE
Full, part and single rubbish removed.
Garage and sheds cleared. Leather 3 piece suites and leather chesterfields wanted.
01922 492007

A1 HOUSE CLEARANCE
Full, part and single rubbish removed.
Garage and sheds cleared. Leather 3 piece suites and leather chesterfields wanted.
01922 492007

ALL ROUND CLEARANCE
Professional family run business
House clearances full or part, also garages, sheds etc.
Telephone Kev
07794 912844

A ABSOLUTE BEST cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Also removals undertaken. **07852 172641 / 07710 360327**

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THE KITCHEN FITTER Over 20 years experience. Call 07881 654757 or 01543 373233.

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LOCKRITE local father and daughter locksmiths, lock-outs, broken locks, UPVC specialist, 24hr service. 01922 780078.

painters / decorators

C&D DECORATING City & Guilds / Wallpapering. Tiling and Flooring. Free quotes, call 07973 286288.

LADY DECORATOR Full house or one wall to customer requirements. Free quotes call: 07522 643706.

plans prepared

ADAM DESIGN, Building Plans. Drawn and submitted to council. Tel: 01902 620200 / 07841 654037. Email: adamdesign@sky.com

plastering

MINT PLASTERING
For the very best in plastering and rendering, full rooms inc materials from 110. Halls, stairs and landings from 200
30 years experience.
Free quotes. All work guaranteed
01922 606503 / 07519 694516

M & S PLASTERING & BUILDING Services. Home/Garden Improvements.Mark or Sara: 07741 770897

MINT PLASTERING & rendering 30 yrs exp. All work guaranteed. 01922 606503 or 07519 694516.

STEVES PLASTERING SERVICE Clean and Reliable, All Work Undertaken, All Areas. Call 0121 567 5919 / 07977 262943.

plumbers

GH PLUMBING
Free Quotes, Gas safe services. Luxury bathrooms supplied & fitted. Landlord Certs. Service & repairs, power flushing, boiler replacements, full central heating systems
07921 800665 | www.ghplumbingltd.co.uk

plumbing & heating

ALL PLUMBING WORK UNDERTAKEN
No job too small or large.
Call Will for a free quote
07521 411108

A.A HEATING & PLUMBING All gas work. Install/ Service/ Repair. 01922 660410 or 07540 950588.

PLUMBING WORK UNDERTAKEN No job too small or large. Call Will for a free quote on: 07521 411108.

removals

KT HOUSE REMOVALS
12 years experience.
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.
LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:
07771 727119

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

KC REMOVALS We beat any quote, full or part loads, all areas. Anything considered. Call on 07867 862227.

KT REMOVALS 12 yrs exp. Single items to full load removals. Local/ distance. Call Ric: 07771 727119.

roofing

We specialise in:
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www.stoppsandpage.co.uk

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skip hire

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Save £££s
All size skips and all areas covered
Same day delivery faster than a phone call!!!
Open 7 days a week
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Mini, midi skips
Prompt delivery / collection
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GOLDSHILL SKIPS
Bring your own waste cheaper than skips. General, Green, Wood waste any size vehicle. Phone for prices:
0121 557 3346

AAA SKIP HIRE All sizes available, competitive prices. Call: 01922 711411(option 2) or 07592 940556.

STONES SKIP HIRE 0121 557 1480 / 07886 721875 www.stonesskiphire.co.uk

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MR B'S UPHOLSTERY
RE- UPHOLSTERING OF SOFA'S, DINING FURNITURE, CARAVANS, CAR RETRIMS AND MORE.
www.mrbsupholstery.co.uk
01543 500677 07738 851601

4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses, Donkeys or Ponies have the required Passport information.

guns & dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

.177 AIR RIFLE, Diana model 38 .177 air rifle and scope, excellent condition. Rare collectable. £250. 0121 556 8535.

TADDY BEAR POMERANIAN male, 4 months old, fully vaccinated, wormed and microchiped, good with children, genuine reason for sale. £350. No offers. 07789 989413.

pets corner

NOTICE TO READERS Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:

1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.

Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

5 Business & Farming

business opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering into any obligations.

business directory

commercial premises

UNITS AND OFFICE SPACE to let in Oldbury, West Bromwich and Walsall. Easy Terms. Ashmore Properties 0121 520 5318.

6 Property

accommodation to let

J9 Accommodation
NO DEPOSIT
★MOVE IN TODAY★
Studios *from* £90pw*
Rooms *from* £65pw*
*Includes Most Bills
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Midland Landlord Accreditation Scheme
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J9accommodation.com

NOTICE TO READERS It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

NOTICE TO READERS Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments/contracts.

BRAND NEW house 3-bed detach, West Brom, garage, nice big kitchen, DG, CH. 07980 208994.

overseas property

NOTICE TO READERS Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

properties wanted

WE PAY 100% of purchase price EVERY TIME!
FAST 4 Your House CASH
You agree the price, we buy the house...
- NO AGENTS FEES
- COMPLETION TO SUIT YOU
- FREE SOLICITORS
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www.black-countryhomes.co.uk * subject to terms

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We can help you make a fresh start
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Home Cash Buyer
Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish
£££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££
Houses / Land Required
Ring Paul 24/7 Local **07870 341 089**
Sandwell area: Call 0121 696 4154
Walsall & Cannock area: Call 01922 432049
Wolverhampton: Call 01902 489901
www.homecashbuyer.co.uk

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Paul Westwood - Home Cash Buyer
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houses for sale

WEST BROMWICH
£160,000.
For details and viewing
Call 07947 801443.
Genuine callers only.

7 Jobs

building & construction

AMP SCAFOLDING 7.5 Tonne Scaffold/Labourer Drivers required. Also carded scaffolding Gangs Call 0121 580 0389

courses

BIRMINGHAM: 25-26 SEPT & 30 NOV.-1 DEC.
STOKE: 2-3 SEPT. TELFORD: 23-24 OCT.
WOLVERHAMPTON: 16-17 SEPT.
Learn how to take blood
TRAIN AS A PHLEBOTOMIST
NATIONALLY RECOGNISED AND ACCREDITED
Introduction to Phlebotomy
TWO DAY COURSE - National UK Qualification
NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE REQUIRED
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For more info or to book: www.geopace.com
HIGH DEMAND IN: Hospitals - GP Surgeries - Clinics - Private Sector - Community - MOD

WORKING FOREMAN
Birmingham Permanent
A.Surman & Co Ltd
Building Contractors established 60 years
We are looking for a working tradesperson, with a good background in the building industry
Competitive rates of pay
Mainly working in commercial, industrial refurbishment
Please send CV to
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nursing & carers

MATURE FEMALE PA (CARER)
required, upto 37hrspw, £7.50-£9.39phr. To assist fun loving lady to remain independent in her own home, Bearwood / Smethwick area. Duties described in job description. DBS carried out by employer, have a full driving licence, non-smoker.S7 (2B) of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975.
Email M.Drinkwater@ idealforall.co.uk
for info pack quoting ref: MD/MEM.

drivers

HGV CLASS 1 DRIVERS transporting steel, £500 per week take home. Call Dan at Butlers immediate start 07791 320040.

dentistry

DENTAL NURSES AND RECEPTIONISTS required, GDC registered, Flexible hours F/T, P/T available - 7 days per week (8am - 11pm) Wage 12K - 20 k - negotiable, overtime & bonuses Immediate starts Apprenticeships available email CV info@ scottarmsdentalpractice.com

8 Motoring

cars over £1500

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

EXCELLENT CONDITION
MERCEDES SLK 230
KOMPRESSOR
1999, silver, black interior, radio, CD, MoT, owned last 8 years, FSH.
£1,795 ono.
01785 664664.

SAAB AERO CONVERTIBLE 2.0L TURBO
2004, 80,000 miles, black, fsh, alarm, long MoT, alloys, leather interior.
£1,750.
01902 787600.

VAUXHALL MERIVIA CDTi 1700 DIESEL
2010, MoT October, alloys, 72,000 miles, panoramic roof, oriental blue, very clean, any trial,
£3,500.
07795 085605.

full time - general

ACME SPRINGS
TOOLSETTER
MULTI SLIDE MACHINES & FLYPRESSES

A West Bromwich based spring making company has an immediate vacancy for an experienced tool setter and spring maker for a small but busy press shop.

Duties will include setting and operating four slide machines and CNC Multislide Wire-formers and strip and the setting of both hand and bench presses. The ideal candidate should be experienced in multislide and four slide operation, however consideration will be given to candidates with some experience. The ability to work on one's own initiative will be beneficial as will the ability to work to the controls of ISO EN BS 9001:2008.

Good clean bright working conditions, 37 hours per week (8.00am-4.00) Monday to Friday.

Apply in writing in the first instance with CV to-

The Managing Director
The Acme Spring Co. Ltd
Brandon Way,
West Bromwich B70 9PQ
e-mail: acmespring@aol.com
pjwhandley@btinternet.com

Scriven & Thornton
Fine Foods Ltd
Est. 1972

SCRIVEN & THORNTON
Cradley Heath require the following staff
EXPERIENCED BUTCHER Full time position
DELI CARVERY ASSISTANT Part time position
TRAINEE / IMPROVER BUTCHER Full time position
GOOD RATES OF PAY
For further details contact Jason on 01384 566652 or email: jason@scrivenandthornton.co.uk

cars under £1500

BARGAIN

CHEVROLET AVEO

1.4 petrol, 5dr, 2009.

38k.

PAS, Air con.

E/W. E/M.

£1,400.

07484 329299.

FOR A QUICK SALE

NISSAN MICRA

Red,
02 Reg.,
MoT'd.

£500 o.n.o.

07840 671910.

ESTATE

PEUGEOT 407

SPORTS HD ESTATE

Diesel, red, 68,000 miles, full MoT, good condition.

£1,500.

0121 526 4058.

RENAULT MEGANE CONVERTIBLE

MoT 2018. Head turner, good condition. Full leather trim, face off radio. Some history, life time brakes. Private plates.

£1,100 ono.

07931 657767.

BARGAIN

ROVER 45 1600CC

2004,
63,000 miles,
factory alloys, alarm,
MoT'd.

£460

07526 001796.

VOLKSWAGEN POLO AUTO

1996, 108,863 miles, white, electric windows, air bag, MoT, new water pump.

£430.

01922 613529.

VW BEETLE CABRIOLET

2005, 1600cc, long MoT, alloys, PAS, EW, drives and looks superb.

£1,195 ono.

07412 831994.

scrap vehicles

OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

ABC AUTO SALVAGE WANTED URGENT
Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available
0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400. Oldbury Area.

classic cars

CLASSIC CAR

AUSTIN MINI 1980

One month MoT.

Offers

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MORRIS MINOR TRAVELLER

1971, 67,000 Miles, Blue, MoT, Tax, Alloys, Stereo, CD, Spot-lights, SWB, 1256cc Engine, Servo Disc Brakes, 5 Speed Gearbox, Twin Carbs

£5,800 ono

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SELLING YOUR CAR?

We have a package to suit every budget.

Packages start from as little as

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6 nights free if you do not sell.

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9 Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES

For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to

Marie Hogg

on

01902 713146

or

email:

marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk

(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

LESLIE WILLIAM JAMES SMITH (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 20 Beechfield Road Smethwick West Midlands B67 6BP, who died on 18/09/2016, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned on or before 18/10/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.

NORTHWOOD BANKS & CO
1600-1602 Coventry Road Yardley
Birmingham B26 1AL

T508947

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
Regeneration and Planning
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

I hereby give notice that Sandwell Council has received the following applications under the planning acts which it is required to give public notice for the reason given at the beginning of each group of applications.

This is a major application.

DC/17/60923	Mr Gerry Kibble Warley Carriers Ltd	Lion Press Limited Oldbury Road West Bromwich B70 9DQ	Proposed change of use from B2 (General Industry) to B8 (Storage or Distribution).

The proposed development may affect the setting of a Listed Building(s), and the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

DC/17/60883	Mr C Mahne 1878 Property Ltd	Haliburton House Hall Street South West Bromwich B70 6BN	Proposed full height scaffolding to eastern and southern elevations.

This is a major application.

The proposed development may affect the setting of a Listed Building(s), and the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

DC/17/60730	Mr Kuldeep Singh	1 - 3 Roebuck Lane Smethwick B66 1BS	Retention of skip hire and waste re-cycling (domestic waste only), proposed two storey office building and single storey metal shed (revised application – pursuant to temporary consent – DC/15/57996).

Members of the public may inspect copies of these applications at Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE (between 8.45a.m. and 5.30p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 9.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Wednesday and 8.45a.m. to 5p.m. Friday) or via the Council's Public Access website (www.sandwell.gov.uk).

Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications can do so via the website, or should write to the Council at the above address within 21 days (and 21 days for Listed Building or Conservation Area consent) of the date of this advertisement quoting the application reference number.

MR JAN BRITTON, Chief Executive

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Borough Council of Sandwell (John's Lane, Tipton) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2017, intends to temporarily prohibit any vehicles from proceeding along John's Lane, Tipton between junction with A461 and the junction with Bevan Road. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 31/08/17 effective from 29/08/17. Traffic will be diverted via Bevan Road, Denbigh Road, A461 and vice-versa. Purpose – new gas connection by Balfour Beatty for Cadent Gas Ltd.

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Ridding Lane, Wednesbury) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2017, intends to temporarily prohibit any vehicles from proceeding along Ridding Lane, Wednesbury between junctions with Mounts Road and Corporation Street. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 18/09/17 effective from 18/09/17. Traffic will be diverted via Mounts Road, Bridge Street, Lower High Street, Ridding Lane and vice-versa. Purpose – bridge works by J Murphy & Sons for Network Rail.

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Lombard Street West, West Bromwich) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2017, intends to temporarily prohibit any vehicles from proceeding along Lombard Street West, West Bromwich between High Street and the bounday of 4 Lombard Street West. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 09/04/18 effective from 25/09/17. Traffic will be diverted via High Street, Victoria Street and Edward Street. Purpose – demolition of buildings for Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Footpath Link between Pound Road and Red House Avenue, Wednesbury) (Temporary Footpath Closure) Order 2017, has made an Order to temporarily prohibit pedestrians from proceeding via the length of footway located between No's 20 Pound Road and 29 Red House Avenue, Wednesbury. Work is expected to be completed by 25/08/17, effective from 21/08/17. Pedestrians will be diverted via Oldbury Street, Brunswick Park Road and vice-versa. Purpose – bridge works by Tony Gee and Partners LLP for Network Rail.

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Churchbridge, Oldbury) (Temporary Road Closure) Order 2017, has made an Order to temporarily prohibit any vehicles from proceeding along Churchbridge, Oldbury between A4123 Wolverhampton Road and the junction with Portway Road. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 03/09/17 effective from 02/09/17. Traffic will be diverted via Wolverhampton Road, Portway Road and vice-versa. Purpose – movement of abnormal load by ALE Heavylift for National Grid.

10 Personals

personal

SINGLE GENTLEMAN 5FT 5INS

WLTM genuine lady 50 - 75 years for Friendship, possible Relationship.

Photo appreciated and returned.

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STAFFORD TOWN PANTHERS

(Under 18's)

Players wanted to join our team.

We train on a Thursday, Evenings 8pm - 9pm at Evans Park, Riverway, Stafford.

and play matches on Sunday Afternoons in the Lichfield League.

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ClassifiedAds

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Try it.. You'll love it!

Dates in ***YOUR*** region

Here's how to use your dating service ...

To ***Place*** your advert call:

0844 381 5936

follow the simple instructions. You will also get ***£10 SMS CHAT CREDIT***

To ***Place*** your ad by text

Simply text **REG** followed by your first name, date of birth, area and your advert (max 155 characters) and send to **80098** **FREE** Standard Network rates apply.

To ***Reply*** to members call:

0906 500 3955

calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.

Have the adverts 6-digit box no written down and do ***key-it-in promptly*** when asked. Don't forget to leave contact details for replies.

To ***Reply*** by text:

Text.. **REPLY26** (leave space) box number (leave space) and then enter your message & send to **80098** eg: **REPLY26** 123456 **hi get in touch...** then send to **80098** Successfully received messages cost £1.50 per SMS received (Max 160 characters). You must exchange 7 messages each before you can swap contact details. Messages may be moderated for your safety and security.

Been left a message? ***Pickup*** your replies on:

0906 500 3957

calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.

THE biggest UK on-line database of 17 million UK REAL users waiting to meet ***you.. visit..*** **http://dating.expressandstar.com**

Single Women

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

ATTRACTIVE lady, young at heart, would like to meet genuine caring guy for coffee and chats, plus days out. **Text only Replies. Mailbox: 6035338**

TINA, 47yrs, GSOH and good figure with average looks. I want a similar man, GSOH looks unimportant. Age is but a number. I have no car but can accommodate. **Text Only. Box: 4145368**

SALLY young 50, happy go lucky blonde, looking to let her hair down with a happy, down to earth guy with dark hair. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428269**

JANE, new to area, hoping to meet an older gent. I am 38yrs, brunette with boyish leggy figure. N/S with GSOH. I've a good job and small flat which I own. **Text Only. Box: 4099268**

ATTRACTIVE lady 61yrs young. Looking for friendship, maybe more with genuine gent. I'm feminine and curvy. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428157**

MANDY, 64yrs but still fit and sexy. Hoping to meet younger local lad for good daytime fun. Chats and texts any time. **Text Only. Box: 4050784**

CHRISTINE, 60 something lady, blue eyed blonde. Sincere, solvent and kind. Call me if you are interested in meeting up. Looks unimportant. Must be N/S. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428155**

PAULINE, 59yrs, nurse who loves her uniform! I'm married but work odd hours so can meet easily. ACA. **Text Only. Box: 4110283**

I am a 57-year-old lady, 5ft 8ins tall, short brownish hair. I am of medium build, outgoing, caring and WLTM similar male. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6024848**

TRACY, 68yrs, recently retired and has time on her hands. Would love to meet a much much younger chap for carefree times. **Text Only. Box: 4006039**

ATTRACTIVE widow, attractive, blonde, GSOH, solvent with good figure. All that's missing is a nice man 60+. Call me if you are interested. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428139**

HELLO, my name is Pia, I am a very petite, kind and respectful Asian girl, hoping to meet an older white man. I'm 23yrs old and have just moved her. **Text Only. Box: 4177099**

MAY, 64, widow, GSOH, lonely and WLTM a nice, kind gentleman of similar age, hopefully someone who likes walking and animals. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428217**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673**

SLIM attractive lady, 59yrs, feminine, kind, loves life. Call me or text me your number and let's meet up. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428143**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715**

SHEILA, 64, widow, GSOH, likes to get out and about, walking, animals, reading, classical music, WLTM a male of similar age. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428181**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399**

CHRISSIE 42, pretty, leggy and feminine searching for romance seeks tall, dark, hunky guy to set her heart on fire. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428237**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375**

GENUINE caring lady 65yrs, varied interests, solvent, loves life, feminine, WLTM gent of any age for life's pleasures. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428151**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 422365**

DEBBIE 44, lonely and fed up brunette, slightly bonkers and in need of love and attention, seeks Mr Special. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428199**

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive brunette with own business, seeks adventurous gent for casual relationship. **Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box 425979**

PEGGY young 58, married but lonely, WLTM a nice man similar age for days, evenings out and friendship. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6025217**

HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed brunette with long lets and decent curves! Looking for a cheeky adventurous man for fun only. I live alone so can accommodate and can travel. Discretion assured. ACA. Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 426205**

FEMALE 66, smoker, enjoys music, TV, meals out/in, looking for male, 68-75, for friendship maybe more. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 4416972**

CARMEL, open minded naughty lady seeks a broad minded strict man to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks unimportant but no time wasters please. **Tel: 0906 515 3043 Box 426851**

JAN 40s, small outgoing affectionate blonde, likes cuddles, seeks romantic male to share special times and bring sunshine into her life. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428089**

CAROLINE, 42yrs, well educated, sophisticated "some call me posh" married lady, looking for no strings midweek liaisons. **Tel: 0906 515 3027 Box 427533**

MARY 46, shy curvy brunette looking for someone to be a good fun friend, to laugh with and love. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428073**

CAROL, attractive lady 55yrs young, slim, tanned, brunette. If you are genuine and looking to date then call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428153**

RACHAEL, 50yrs, blue-eyed attractive lady, loves films, music and home life. WLTM gent 50-70yrs. ACA or text. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428149**

TAMARA, 44yrs, beautiful Indian lady seeks a Muslim gent 40+ **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428147**

IF you are interested in meeting an attractive black lady then please call me. I'm Nikki, 57yrs, attractive, interested and kind. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428145**

CAROL, 60 something lady with a wicked sense of humour, please call or text for more info. I promise to reply to all callers. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428141**

LADY, 63, WLTM a gentleman of similar age, for friendship and outings. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428029**

ATTRACTIVE, slim brunette, 54, widow, kind, caring, romantic, enjoys the arts, sightseeing, dining out, seeks professional gent with GSOH and family values, with mutual interests. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428013**

GEORGINA, 50s, attractive, happy blonde, loves sport, theatre, seeks intelligent, lively male to share the fun side of life with. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428053**

SUE 53, voluptuous, outgoing, cuddly and bubbly, loves a joke and just wants fun, flirting and laughter in her life again, seeks her Mr Charming. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427913**

MICHELLE, 37, pretty, very fit, well travelled seeks active, broadminded male to share new experiences and adventures with. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427897**

EMMA 56, active and always on the go, seeks fit, active, country loving guy who shares passion for the outdoors. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427811**

ATTRACTIVE lonely widow, mid 70s seeking gent for friendship. Pls call or text. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427879**

ATTRACTIVE lady, 57yrs, great sense of humour, now looking for good times and good memories. Hoping to meet gent any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427883**

STUNNINGLY attractive black lady, 50s, with blissful imagination, you have to call to hear what's on offer, you won't be sorry!! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427877**

Single Men

VERY fit, elderly widower, loves walking, bird watching, exploring Europe, WLTM a lady for companionship. Please reply via box number. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428171**

MALE 46, genuine and honest and very caring looking for a LTR with lady. **Text only Replies. Mailbox: 5422168**

MALE 20s, chilled out and happy in life looking for woman to share life with. **Text only Replies. Mailbox: 6034839**

MALE, 47, fit, slim, honest man, seeking nice, slim, honest lady for LTR, going out for drinks and having good times together. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427923**

MALE, late 60s, N/S, retired, 5ft9, slim build, enjoys holidays abroad, weekends away, travel, meals out. Looking to meet female, N/S, who enjoys similar interests, to share good times together, for friendship and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428219**

JEFF, 60s, tall, fit, young outlook, N/S, car owner, seeks similar lady for friendship, outings out etc. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428175**

SINGLE dad, tall, blonde hair, good looking, keeps fit, loves the cinema, meals out, looking for a single lady for date nights. Single mum welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428163**

MALE, dark hair, dark eyes, slim, 47, likes walking, camping, pubs, dancing, looking for a slim, genuine lady, for fun times and LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427831**

PHIL 55, divorced, 5ft 10ins, slim, OHAC, seeks female, 18 plus for discreet adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 401875**

HI my name is Jay. I'm looking for a lady to have a lovely evening with, maybe once or twice a week. Looking forward to hearing from you soon. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427927**

JACK 23, single, tall, young looking guy, kind and respectful, seeking female age/looks not important for mutual NSA fun. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6026038**

MALE 64, fit, non-smoker, looking for NSA fun with lady, any age. I am kind and caring but miss the touch of a woman. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6025714**

TALL, dark, attractive male, 56, 6ft, WLTM an attractive female, any age, for discreet fun and intimate times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428109**

MALE, attractive, 6ft2, single father, loves a laugh and a giggle, looking for a lady for evenings out, company and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424303**

FUN loving Irish man, seeks relationship, for fun times and going out. Please get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 428077**

MALE, 47, fit, slim, honest man, seeking nice, slim, honest lady for LTR, going out for drinks and having good times together. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427923**

MALE, dark hair, dark eyes, slim, 47, likes walking, camping, pubs, dancing, looking for a slim, honest lady, for fun times and LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427831**

MALE, dark hair, dark eyes, slim, 47, likes walking, camping, pubs, dancing, looking for a slim, honest lady, for fun times and LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427831**

I am Kev, 57, looking for a lady in my life. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6023170**

SHAUN, 50, honest, reliable, OHOC, employed, animal lover, likes walks in the country, meals out in country pubs, walking my dogs, looking for my soul mate. If you would like to know more get in touch. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427497**

GENTLEMAN, kind, considerate, tactile, thoughtful and caring, hobbies include growing fuschias and vintage tractors, looking for a country girl, someone with no plans of grandeur. Truth and trust number 1 as I trust you so you tell me the truth, and vice versa. Looking for someone to hold and love forever. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427791**

SINGLE male, 43, looking for female friends for txt, phone chats, maybe more. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6017886**

MALE, 47, fit, slim, honest man, seeking nice, slim, honest lady for LTR, going out for drinks and having good times together. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 427923**

MALE 40s, 5ft 8ins, brown hair, seeks lovely honest girl for fun and friendship please. **Text only replies. Mailbox: 6018513**

MALE, 50, brown hair, brown eyes, average looks, 16 and a half stone, good sense of humour, animal lover with loads of love and security to give to the right person. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418783**

MALE 5ft 8ins, average looks, seeking genuine, honest, caring female. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 413945**

HI my name is Ben. I am 43 years old, 5ft7, slim build, smart dresser, looking for a bored similar lady for naughty texting. **Text only Replies. Mailbox: 6007244**

GENUINE 56yr old male, divorced, OHAC, looking for nice lady for friendship, maybe more. Wolverhampton. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 405551**

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

Customer support
Call **0207 720 7130** Monday - Friday 10am - 4pm
or email us at **support@jmediauk.co.uk**

http://dating.expressandstar.com

CALL CHARGES*: DATING 18+ and have the bill payer's permission. 0844 calls cost 7 pence per min, 090 calls cost £1.55 per min, plus your phone company's access charge. Calls are recorded and may appear on your bill. TEXT*: Text alerts are charged at £1.50 per week. To unsubscribe to text alerts, text DATING STOP to 63333. To cancel free match alerts, text STOP to 07781474042. For full T&Cs go to www.localdates-terms.co.uk/. REPLY BY TEXT*: 80098/89990 costs £1.50 per SMS received (max 150 characters). Guaranteed up to 4 messages for each message you send, Service only available where phone icon shown. Messages are moderated. Minimum 7 messages must be sent before contact details can be exchanged. This service is not computer generated. All messages are responded to by real service users. No meetings can be guaranteed. If arranging a meeting be sure to choose a public space and do not give personal details to people you have not met. To STOP text stop to 80098/89990. Service provided by No Goats Ltd. Help: 0207 720 7130. ALL SERVICES*: By texting any shortcode you consent to the owner of that shortcode sending you the occasional marketing message. To opt out of receiving these send NO INFO to 80098. DATA PROTECTION: Service provided by JMedia UK Ltd, RH16 3EG, 0207 720 7130. We will collect the details you provide and may send you details of other services and events operated by us. We may pass your details onto this newspaper for marketing or PhonePayPlus for regulatory purposes. Advertisers may come from our national database and from our pdc app, your ad may also appear on our dating app. wc. 14/08/17

Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, August 17, 2017

Major cleaning operation switches fleet to Škoda Fabias

Skoda proves a sweeping success with Molly Maid

By Anthony Martyn

Škoda UK has won a sparkling new contract with the domestic cleaning franchise, Molly Maid, to supply an additional 15 Fabia S 1.0 Hatch models to its UK fleet and a further 60 in the next year.

Established 33 years ago, Molly Maid's UK wide cleaning operation utilises 370 cars across its fleet to carry out over 300,000 cleans every year. 30 Škoda Fabias have already been added to the fleet with 15 new vehicles currently on order, and plans to increase numbers further by replacing existing Nissan, Toyota and Vauxhall models following the end of vehicle cycles.

The UK's number one domestic cleaning company relies on its vehicles to provide an efficient service to customers and reflect the professional image of the business.

The Fabia's sleek design and award-winning practicality and performance complimented the cleaning firm's requirements perfectly.

The Fabia was chosen thanks to its fantastic value for money, with low p11d value and highly competitive

Jonathan Holden, chief operating officer of Molly Maid

lease cost compared to competitors. Plus, the BIK rate was a desirable factor to keep overall running costs low for drivers. The Fabia also offers a sizeable 330-litre boot (seats up, 1,150 litres with the rear bench folded), which is ideal to carry bulky cleaning equipment.

The resilience, efficiency and coverage of the Škoda retailer network was essential to securing the deal. With a high annual turnover of vehicles, the ability to deliver new models quickly to staff nationwide is vital to ensure excellent customer service is maintained.

Jonathan Holden, chief operating officer of Molly Maid, commented on the new deal: "The Škoda Fabia fitted the bill completely for us, right down to the fundamentals of cost – not just for the business but our drivers – practicality and overall design.

"Image matters in this arena, and that was a huge consideration, as each car is required to be in the Molly Maid navy blue with our specially designed livery, to act as a roaming billboard for the company.

"We made the move to Škoda, as previous manufacturers couldn't offer the same combination of benefits as the Fabia.

"We also need a rapid response from a dealer network to both supply and service vehicles to save on costly downtime and Škoda has proven time and time again to deliver on all fronts."

Henry Williams, head of fleet at Škoda UK, added: "We are delighted to be working with Molly Maid, they have a huge network of drivers across the UK who mainly drive in towns and cities, therefore the compact Fabia was the ideal choice.

"The five door S model offers a deceptively sizable boot and the vehicle's fuel efficiency and running costs ensure that it is economical for business as well.

"We look forward to building on our relationship with Molly Maid in the coming years."

The ŠkodaFabia is a modern small car available in four trim levels: S, SE, SEL and Monte Carlo with prices starting from just £11,100.

The Fabia utilises the crystalline shape and sharp lines of the Škoda design language and incorporates the brand's fundamental values of providing space, comfort and functionality.

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58 Citroen C6 2.7 HDi V6 Lignage 4dr Auto White 64K		£8,995
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59 Citroen C6 Diesel 2.7 HDi V6 Exclusive 4dr Auto Silver		£6,995
57 Citroen C6 Diesel 2.7 HDi V6 Lignage 4dr Auto Black	£7,295	£7,695
14 Citroen Gr C4 Picasso 1.6 e-HDi 115 Air Exclusive Red 19k		£11,995
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64 Ford Fiesta Hatchback 1.0 EcoBoost Zetec Black 27k		£7,995
58 Ford Fiesta Hatchback 1.25 Zetec 3dr [82] Red 23k	£4,795	£4,995
13 Ford Fiesta Hatchback 1.6 Zetec Powershift Yellow 32k	£7,295	£7,495
63 Ford Focus Diesel 1.6 TDCi 115 Zetec Black 32k	£7,795	£8,295
14 Ford Grand C-max Diesel 1.6 TDCi Titanium Black 53k	£9,495	£9,995
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63 Nissan Note 1.5 dCi Acenta Premium 5dr Grey 31k	£6,795	£7,295
14 Nissan Qashqai 1.2 Acenta [Smart Vision Pack] Black 33k	£10,995	£11,495
14 Nissan Qashqai 1.5 dCi Acenta [Smart Vision Pack] Grey 57k	£10,495	£10,795
14 Nissan Qashqai 1.5 dCi Acenta Premium Black 25k		£12,995
60 Nissan Qashqai Diesel 1.5 dCi [110] Tekna Beige 48k	£8,795	£9,295
Peugeot		
63 Peugeot 2008 1.6 e-HDi Active EGC Brown 21k	£7,995	£8,295
57 Peugeot 207 Sw Estate 1.4 VTi S 5dr Black 91k	£1,995	£2,495
63 Peugeot 208 Hatchback 1.6 VTi Allure Auto Grey 40k	£6,995	£7,195
63 Peugeot 3008 Diesel 1.6 e-HDi Active EGC Black 21k		£8,995
11 Peugeot 3008 Diesel Estate 1.6 HDi 112 Sport Silver 75k	£4,995	£5,495
14 Peugeot 3008 Diesel Estate 1.6 HDi Active Grey 17k	£8,995	£9,495
7 Peugeot 307 Diesel Sw Estate 2.0 HDi SE Grey 78k		£2,495
13 Peugeot 308 Diesel 1.6 HDi 92 Access Silver 71k	£3,995	£4,495
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65 Renault Grand Scenic 1.5 dCi Dynamique Nav Black 20k	£11,695	£11,995
65 Renault Kadjar Diesel 1.5 dCi Dynamique Nav Grey 28k		£12,995
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13 Vauxhall Astra 2.0 CDTi 16V ecoFLEX Elite [165] Blue 32k		£7,495
58 Vauxhall Combo 1.3 CDTi Auto With Access Ramp Silver 81k	£2,495	£2,995
60 Vauxhall Insignia 2.0 CDTi ecoFLEX SE [160] Blue 125k	£3,495	£3,795
14 Vauxhall Meriva 1.6 CDTi 16V eco Exclusiv Blue 19k	£6,995	£7,495
62 Vauxhall Meriva Estate 1.4i 16V SE Grey 23k	£5,995	£6,495
65 Vauxhall Mokka Diesel 1.6 CDTi ecoFLEX SE Black 22k	£11,495	£11,995
14 Vauxhall Mokka Hatchback 1.6i SE Blue 21k	£9,795	£10,295
14 Vauxhall Zafira 1.7 CDTi ecoFLEX Design Nav [110] Brown 42k		£7,495
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14 BMW X1 Diesel Estate sDrive 18d SE Step Auto White 23k		£13,795
14 BMW X1 Diesel Estate xDrive 18d xLine Black 30k		£14,495
54 Daihatsu Copen Coupe Cabriolet 2dr, Red 40k		£2,995
13 Hyundai I20 Diesel Hatchback 1.1 CRDi Active Black 49k	£5,295	£5,495
13 Kia Sportage Diesel Estate 1.7 CRDi ISG 2 White 36k	£11,495	£11,995
64 Kia Sportage Diesel Estate 2.0 CRDi KX-2 Blue 18k	£14,495	£14,995
14 Mercedes A Class A180 CDI BlueEFFICIENCY Sport Grey 40k		£13,495
65 Mini Hatchback 1.5 Cooper Black 16k		£12,995
14 Mitsubishi Asx Estate 1.6 3 5dr Black 35k		£9,695
13 Seat Altea Diesel Estate 2.0 TDI CR SE Copa DSG Grey 30k		£7,995
14 Skoda Roomster Estate 1.2 TSI 105 SE DSG Maroon 23k		£8,295
14 Skoda Yeti Outdoor Estate 1.2 TSI SE White 27k	£10,495	£10,995
14 Toyota Yaris 1.33 VVT-i Icon+ Multidrive S Turquoise 26k	£8,295	£8,495
14 Volkswagen Golf Diesel 1.6 TDI 105 SE Silver 44k		£9,695
64 Volkswagen Tiguan 2.0 TDi BlueMotion Tech DSG Silver 50k		£12,995
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Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, August 17, 2017

Ford leads CV sales in UK with Transit

By Anthony Martyn

Ford maintained its sales leadership through the month of July, and for the first half of the year, heading total vehicle, car and commercial vehicle (CV) sales in the UK.

Highlights of the July sales figures issued today by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) include:

- Ford Transit takes top three spots for CV sales in the UK- Transit Custom (1st), Transit (2nd) and Transit Connect (3rd)
- Ford Focus becomes UK best-selling car, whilst new Ford Fiesta arrives in showrooms
- Ford has four models in the UK Top 20 – Focus (1st), Fiesta (4th), Transit Custom (7th) and Kuga (12th)
- Seven Ford models lead their respective segments; Fiesta, Focus, Transit Courier, Transit Custom, Transit, Transit Connect and the Ranger

As the all-new Ford Fiesta arrives in UK showrooms, the Ford Focus takes the top UK sales spot overall for the month of July, with the Ford Transit taking first, second and third in CV sales.

Andy Barratt, Ford of Britain chairman and managing director, said: "It's been an excellent month for Ford in the UK with not only the Focus becoming the UK's best-seller, but also the Dunton-developed Ford Transit remaining the nation's favourite van range posting all three top spots for CVs sales this month. "It's a really exciting time for Ford in the UK with the new Ford Fiesta starting to arrive in showrooms and seeing its first registrations. It is our broadest Fiesta range yet, from the luxurious Fiesta Vignale to the Fiesta Active, and we're really proud it has been receiving rave reviews from across the industry's media."

Ford Focus was best-seller in the UK for July

Ford Transit takes top three spots for CV sales in the UK

The official figures released by the SMMT today show that industry car sales in July were down 9.3 per cent to 161,997 units, compared with July 2016. Ford car sales were 16,934, 2,840 registrations ahead of its nearest rival. For the year to date (end July) total UK car sales were 1,563,808, down 2.2 per cent compared with the same period in 2016. Ford car sales for this period were 185,250, 61,235 registrations ahead of its nearest rival.

Industry CV sales saw a growth of 1.1 per cent in July to 24,766. Ford again topped the CV UK sales, Ford Transit Custom remained best-seller, with Ford Transit 2nd and the Ford Transit Connect 3rd. Ford achieved 8,366 CV sales with 31.9 per cent of the market share- 2.2 per cent above July 2016, and 19.3 per cent share ahead of the nearest rival.

The Ford Focus becomes the UK's best-selling vehicle of the month with 5,251 registrations and 3.2 per cent market share. This comes as the UK's favourite new Ford Fiesta, with a 3.6 per cent market share year-to-date, starts to hit UK dealerships.

The UK's top 20 best-selling vehicles this month include Focus (1st), Fiesta (4th), Transit Custom (7th) and Kuga (12th), while Fiesta, Focus, Transit Courier, Transit Custom, Transit, Transit Connect and the Ranger all top their respective market segments in July 2017.

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MNA

CHANGE UP A GEAR WITH MOTORING Express & Star

Gareth Barry with students at Ellesmere College, where he is patron and where son Oscar attends

Barry in action for Everton against his former team Villa, where the ex-skipper remains a firm favourite

Barry first played for Villa in 1998 and made 441 appearances

Gareth Barry gets involved with Chelsea's Diego Costa

Every game counts as Barry closes on record

MAY 2, 1998 – an otherwise insignificant date but for the fact that this was the day a certain Gareth Barry made his Premier League debut.

Few could have ever envisaged that, almost two decades later, that fresh-faced youngster who had arrived from the south coast would be on his way to setting the all-time Premier League appearance record.

Barry's move to Villa Park from Brighton, when he was just 16, was controversial enough.

He arrived with Michael Standing – a fellow midfielder who played zero first-team minutes in four years before leaving for Bradford.

Barry's debut against Sheffield Wednesday, however, was glimpse of things to come.

On that day he featured alongside current England boss Gareth Southgate and the late Ugo Ehiogu in a defensive trio under then boss John Gregory.

There were little doubts over his level of talentand a decade later, in 2008, he was a proud captain at Villa Park.

Chalked

An adopted Brummie, Barry was the key cog in Martin O'Neill's eye-catching outfit which pushed the 'established' top four so hard in the mid-noughties.

Barry had chalked up 441 appearances in claret and blue before he moved north to Manchester City, claiming a "new challenge" was required. Within a few years he was an FA Cup winner and Premier League champion.

But the most prized of all could be yet to come.

For that Villa status is one thing, and winners medals are another, but Barry, now 36, is not far from etching himself into English top flight history.

Now with Everton (but coveted by Tony Pulis at Albion), Barry has another year on his deal at Goodison Park and is set for a huge individual milestone.

Ryan Giggs' Premier League appearance record stands at 632, Barry is just four behind on 628.

He can't hide from the scale of the honour.

"I do like stats. I'd be lying if I was saying I don't look out for them," said the former Villa skipper.

"That record's been spoken about more the closer I get now. Obviously it's not the same now being 36 as when you are 26 but in terms of being able to do a job I'm still feeling really strong and still enjoying it.

"Enjoying it is more important than anything and at the minute I've got a great manager that understands my age and what I can and can't do.

"If I don't play any more Premier League games I'd be immensely proud of how many I've done and what I've achieved.

"If I do break it then my name's on top of the pile and my parents will probably be extra proud. We'll see what happens."

Barry, who is now based in Cheshire, has recently been made a patron of Shropshire's Ellesmere College's football academy, where his son Oscar attends.

And there remains a sparkle in his eye when discussing Villa.

He points to the length of time spent at Villa Park and at Bodymoor Heath, where he developed from a boy into a man – from spindly academy hopeful to worshipped first-team skipper.

"I look out for Villa's results all of the time," he added. "The majority of my friends are from Birmingham, supporting either Villa or Blues. There are so many memories at Villa for me.

"Because I've been gone so long people forget how many games I did actually play – it's a time I'll never forget, they brought me into Premier League life.

"My game improved when I left school and went to Villa. The coaches, youth team, reserve team and to the first team, they were fantastic with me.

"Any supporter will tell you that they like young players coming through. If a player attached to an academy can eventually go through to being captain and wear that armband, it's fantastic for them. I was lucky enough to do it at Villa and really enjoyed it. They taught me how to become a professional footballer and what's needed. It's a time I'll never forget."

The Villa Barry left in 2009 are a long way from the club's current plight. Steve Bruce knows the importance of his first full season at the helm. Barry believes his former side are in the right hands.

"It's good to see Steve Bruce there, he had a little sticky patch but he's a fantastic manager.

"I think Villa are finding their feet again. It's been a few tough years with the relegation, which was always going to be hard, but they just needed that bit of time to settle and Steve Bruce is the right man to do that.

"He'll get a squad that'll eventually start to find their feet and begin to push for promotion."

Faithful

A quick search of Barry's name on internet forums or social media will instantly display a plethora of nostalgic Villa Park faithful yearning for a Barry return.

Earlier this year he attended the Stiliyan Petrov Foundation dinner, where a photo was snapped for a smartly-dressed Barry posing with Villa's current midfield prodigy Jack Grealish. The Solihull-born 21-year-old has a long, long way to go eclipsing the sort of reputation Villa's former No.6 built.

He'll be 37 by next summer, at the end of his Everton contract and with – presumably – the Premier League record safely under his belt.

A Villa return couldn't happen...could it?

"You never say never but as always Everton is the sole focus for me at the moment."

And what will come after the boots are hung up? "I'm not ruling anything out, I'm not going to do the badges while I'm still playing. I've made that decision.

"I want to finish playing and look back and see if I do miss being around it and whether I want to go into coaching. I'm not one to plan too much so I'll go from there.

"I've got one more left which will take me till I'm 37 which, for a footballer, is veteran stages – so I realise where I am in my career. I'm enjoying it still and that's the most important thing."

SPORTING FEATURE

By Lewis Cox

"If I don't play any more Premier League games I'd be immensely proud of how what I've achieved."

Wolves old boy in £18m Hornets move

FORMER Wolves player Andre Gray has become the most expensive Black Country footballer in history in an £18 million deal from Burnley to Premiership rivals Watford.

Wednesfield-born Gray, 26, scored nine times in the Premier League last year. Formerly on the youth books at Wolves, he was released by the club at the age of 13.

Gray becomes the most expensive footballer from the area, more than double the £8.5 million paid for Stan Collymore by Liverpool.

The striker was knifed in a gang fight over Christmas in 2011. In 20012 Gray was suspended for four matches and fined £25,000 over homophobic Tweets he had posted.

Gray, who progressed through Shrewsbury's youth system, joined Luton in 2012 and made more than 100 appearances before moving on for an undisclosed fee in 2014 to Brentford, for whom he scored 20 goals in 52 games. He had a loan spell at Telford in 2009-10.

Golfers tee up chance to play at The Belfry

GOLFERS from The Chase and Penn clubs have teed up a round at the Ryder Cup course The Belfry for the national final of the American Golf 9 Hole Individual Championship.

Home golfer Paul Elsey held off Laurence Horan by a point in the regional qualifying held at Penn Golf Club.

They now join qualifiers from all over the UK and Ireland in front of Sky Sports' cameras for the grand final on September 7 and 8. They are both also in contention for the Tournament of Champions in Mauritius.

"Our 9 Hole Championship is hugely popular," said Daniel Gathercole, director of marketing and communication at American Golf. "It gives golfers the chance to play championship golf after work and still be home at a reasonable time.

"Golf has struggled to find a place in people's busy lives over recent years so we're delighted that events such as the 9 Hole Championship have proved so popular."

Hawks take flight for national T20 final

C&R Hawks are gearing up for the biggest game in their short history after reaching the finals day of the ECB National T20 tournament.

The Birmingham League Division Two outfit beat Essex League side Wanstead and Snaresbrook at Walsall CC's Gorway ground to reach the showpiece final at Derbys 3aaa ground, home to Derbyshire County Cricket Club. Highlights of the September 11 clash will be broadcast on Sky Sports.

Skipper Mubeen Rashid said: "This is already the furthest any Birmingham League club has ever got in the competition and that is something we are very proud of."

Hawks only formed in 2014 by the merger of Hawkins Sports and Cannock and Rugeley. But they have some serious talent in their ranks, including Omar Ali, the younger brother of England star Moeen. Kabir Ali, Moeen's cousin, played 14 one-day internationals himself between 2003 and 2006 and though now aged 36 has proved a threat with both bat and ball as Hawks battled their way into the later stages of the tournament.

Sport

Ex-Villa ace Barry closing in on appearance record

Page 39

Cunningham eyes up Far East for fight

CRAIG Cunningham has been sparring with world champions again after landing a fight in Singapore to defend his WBC International middleweight title.

Cunningham will head overseas for an Asian experience after failing to land a big fight on home soil.

The 29-year-old Brummie, who lives in Oldbury, has never boxed outside of the UK but will now undertake a near 7,000 mile trip.

The skilful southpaw is set to take on Azizbek Abdugofurov, from Uzbekistan, at a venue and date yet to be specified.

Cunningham, left, and Billy Joe

Abdugofurov is scheduled to meet Tanzania's Ibrahim Tamba for an eight-rounder in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on September 12 which could act as a warm-up.

'Triple A' – full name Azizbek Abdumuxtar Ogli Abdugofurov and aged 25 – has racked up six wins with four TKOs and has already won the WBC Asian Council middleweight crown.

Four of his bouts have come in Singapore, one a title defence in Far East Square. The OCBC Arena, within the Singapore Sports Hub, is being considered for his next contest.

Cunningham has had two keep-busy outings this year, points wins over Anthony Fox and William Warburton, over a frustrating 2017.

He was due to be the voluntary defence in April for British champion Tommy Langford, who instead opted for a losing effort at WBA interim world honours.

Cunningham's last major victory 10 months ago saw him claim the WBC bauble against Anthony Ogogo.

New members go the distance with race challenges

THIS weekend it was great to see several new members race for the first time for Black Country Triathletes in sprint distance races in Nantwich and Tewksbury.

Ashley Kirkham and Huw Jones travelled to Nantwich to compete in the North West Sprint Tri with a 500m pool swim, 21km bike and 5km run. Kirkham finished in 1:24:23 and Jones in 1:30:43. Jones was delighted with his swim as three weeks ago he was struggling to do more than a few lengths continuously front crawl.

Lucy McNeill-Briggs and Lorraine Gaytten travelled to Tewksbury to race in the Bredon Hardwick Sprint Tri, achieving times of 1:31:01 and 1:46:17.

Podium joy after a marathon contest

From left, Siviter, Scott and Wright

ENDURANCE riders who entered the UK's first 1,000 km race had already assured their place in the history books. But the Black Country's Double Two Racing had the added bonus of leaving the six-hour marathon battle with another podium.

Pete Wright, from Tividale, and Martyn Siviter, from Blackheath, were joined by guest rider and 'star of the future', Scott Stevens.

And after a terrible start, which included a 100mph crash for Siviter on the first lap, the team slowly but surely battled their way to second in the 600cc class and 16th overall following hours of intense racing at Donington Park.

Wright said: "It was a fantastic performance by the whole team and everyone supporting us.

"There was a massive effort by the team riders and our brilliant guest rider Scott Stevens, a star of the future we think. We started off just under five laps down on everyone, gained 30 places and only finished four laps behind the eventual class winners, so a win was definitely on the cards."

A FLYING START FOR NEW BOYS

NEW signings always add an element of anticipation to any game, but rarely do they exceed expectations as much as this in their first outing.

Last season it took Matt Phillips 10 games to settle into his stride, and it was even longer before Hal Robson-Kanu got a chance to win round the fans.

But this time around, the new boys took centre stage. Jay Rodriguez shot out of the blocks, proving in the first 15 minutes exactly why Tony Pulis picked him up front instead of Salomon Rondon.

Testing Asmir Begovic from all angles, the £12 million man added a much-needed goal threat from open play. But just as it looked like Rodriguez would add a well-deserved goal to his competitive debut, Ahmed Hegazi ghosted in at the back post and crashed home a towering header.

The big Egyptian was then superb in the second half alongside Craig Dawson, and together they stifled every single one of Bournemouth's limp probing attacks. One game in and his cult hero status at The Hawthorns is already in the post.

Albion haven't done enough business so far this summer, everyone knows that, but based on the first match, the two players they have signed are very shrewd acquisitions.

On the face of it, this was a typical Tony Pulis victory; a solid defensive display won by a set-piece. It was fitting, too, that Albion triumphed 1-0 on Gary Megson's first game back at the club.

Bournemouth may have lacked cutting edge, but there was something reassuring about such a resolute performance after the Premier League burst into action with 13 goals from its opening two games, particularly with both Jonny Evans and Gareth McAuley out injured.

But the 25,000 or so fans who went to The Hawthorns know that – in the first half particularly – Albion were electric.

Albion's Ahmed Hegazi celebrates his match-winning goal as the Birmingham Road end goes wild

Chadli cash hope to boost Pulis's budget

TONY PULIS is ready to cash in on Nacer Chadli this summer to boost his transfer window budget. Swansea are believed to be lining up the Belgian as a replacement for Everton-bound Gylfi Sigurdsson, who is set to join Goodison Park for a fee nearing £50m.

Albion, who spent £13m rising to £15m on Chadli last summer, are happy to keep the Belgian this season, but may be swayed by an offer in excess of £25m provided they can find a suitable replacement.

Pulis started 19-year-old Sam Field ahead of Chadli in Saturday's 1-0 win over Bournemouth and then brought on 17-year-old midfielder Rekeem Harper for his first-team debut while the Belgian remained on the bench.

"It's been publicised that Swansea are interested in Nacer – if they are, we'll deal with Swansea," said Pulis. "Let's just get our players in first."

The Baggies are hoping to make two signings before the Burnley game on Saturday, with Pulis targeting a centre-back and a central midfielder.

It's a family affair with local clash

CRADLEY new boy Richard Hall is preparing for a family affair in their crunch clash with local rivals Birmingham at Monmore Green on Monday.

Hall will face off with stepson Jack Parkinson-Blackburn, the teenage hotshot who is leading the Brummies' quest for a third straight National League title. The derby date is a huge occasion for both clubs as they fight to reach the top four to earn a play-off place.

But Hall insists his new side have what it takes to secure bragging rights and claim a vital three points. "It will be quite a rivalry," said Hall. "We went up against each other with Sheffield and Peterborough earlier this year, we clashed and he put out his shoulder.

"It is always nice to go up against Jack, he is an up-and-coming rider who is on a mission for Birmingham at the minute and riding really well. Come what may, there will be no hard feelings.

"We know what Birmingham can do around Monmore Green but our top three is capable of matching theirs."

Hall got his Heathens career off to a dream start with a maximum in last week's crushing win over the Isle of Wight at Perry Barr. And he is hoping for more of the same having given his confidence a much-needed boost.

"It was a good return because I have struggled a lot with confidence all season. I would have been happy to go home with 10 points but this maximum has given me the boost I needed to kick on and finish the season well."

Wolves keep rivals in the drop zone

WALSALL'S defeat to rivals Wolverhampton kept them in relegation trouble towards the foot of the Birmingham & District League Premier Division.

Danny Cox top scored for Walsall with 57 but a total of 157 was not enough. Matthew Kleinveldt took 5-32 for Wolverhampton then hit 47.

Kidderminster failed to make up much ground, despite Craig Wood hitting 12 boundaries in an undefeated innings of 131 against Ombersley, who won the Worcestershire derby by four wickets.

West Bromwich Dartmouth lost at home to Dorridge, Kadeer Ali taking 5-64 in the visitors' 222-9.

★★★

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